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## Late rush for last fee-free courses

# Students jam lines in panic for places

By JOHN O'LEARY AND DAVID CHARTER

UNIVERSITIES reported an unprecedented scramble for the last free higher education places yesterday, as anxious students snapped up a record number of vacancies within 24 hours of A-level results being published.

Admissions tutors said panic-stricken applicants were jamming telephone lines or appearing in person on campus, fearful that next year's introduction of fees would heighten competition this year. Two-thirds of the expected 310,000 vacancies had been filled by yesterday morning.

With late applications 40 per cent up, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (Ucas) said that up to 30,000 more people than usual could compete for places in clearing. Tony Higgins, the chief executive, said: "The early signs suggested greater pressure on places."

Despite ministers' concession on fees for gap-year students starting next year, more applicants are chasing fewer university places this summer. Thousands of mature students have brought forward their plans to start courses to beat the new charges, while others are expected to enter clearing rather than retake A levels. By early yesterday, Ucas had confirmed 211,575 university places, compared to 177,019 at the same stage last year.

Desperate applicants were using every manner of approach to win a place yesterday. Many universities introduced e-mail inquiry forms to ease the pressure on their telephone hotlines, and the website introduced by Ucas this summer received 80,000 visits in a day.

At Leeds University, one girl drove from London with her father only to be told that there were no places on the English course. Several others turned up at the dental school, which had no places in clearing.

Gillian Healy, the admissions officer at the University of Manchester, said: "It is heart-breaking, but they are actually coming up and knocking on closed doors. We have even had a call from a student on holiday in Nepal trying to get a place."

Manchester Metropolitan University took 50,000 telephone inquiries in the first 12 hours after A-level results were published. Carol Youton, a university spokeswoman, said: "Once the results were out, there was a feeling of panic among many students."

The university had taken 20 per cent more calls for science and engineering courses — the

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most difficult to fill — than at the same point last year. Ms Youton said admissions officers had been pleasantly surprised by the calibre of applicants. Students appeared to be acting decisively out of fear of extra competition in advance of fees.

Andrew Hindmarsh, the head of admissions at Sheffield University, said courses were filling up much more quickly than in previous years. For the first time, all vacancies in mathematics were taken in the first two days of clearing, and only a limited number of places were left in physics and some branches of engineering.

The University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology had only 30 places left yesterday. Many universities are remaining open over the weekend to reassure worried applicants and ensure that they have the pick of the remaining students.

Parents and students worried over losing money year-by-year in the Government's plans to phase out maintenance grants were yesterday offered reassurances by the Department for Education and Employment. A spokeswoman said that all students starting this October, as well as the 19,000 "gap year" students who applied this year, will continue to receive grants at the same level.



Cernuschi arriving at court yesterday. She told police she acted in a fit of temper.

## Stockbroker jailed for road rage assault on cyclist

By MICHAEL HORSNELL AND KATIE KNIGHT

A WOMAN stockbroker who exploded with road rage and ran down a cyclist for clipping the wing mirror of her car was jailed for five months yesterday.

Frances Cernuschi, 47, who swerved into medical student Alexander Wade's bicycle to teach him a lesson for scratching her Rover saloon, also had the vehicle confiscated.

Judge Peter Fingert told her at Southwark Crown Court, London: "It was a deliberate assault by you, using your car as a weapon on an innocent road user."

Cernuschi, dressed in a bright blue skirt and jacket suit, who earns £60,000 a year at the London stockbrokers Charles Stanley, looked shocked as she was led to the cells. Her husband gasped with surprise.

Joe Cernuschi, 60, a retired BT engineer, said later at the couple's home in Tooting, south London: "I don't want to talk about it. It's disgusting." The couple, married for 24 years, have no children. Friends say she has been under strain at work and from caring for her husband, who is in poor health.

Mr Wade, 21, who received cuts and bruises, was knocked from his bicycle in Kennington Road, south-east London, and just missed being hit by the car. His assailant, who was ordered to pay him £400 compensation and disqualified from driving for four years, sped off but was pursued by a motorcyclist, who alerted police. Cernuschi admitted dangerous driving.



Wade cut and bruised after clipping mirror

common assault and criminal damage as she drove to work on January 22.

Anne Darlow, prosecuting, said: "The car pulled up at a set of red traffic lights at the same time Mr Wade's bike passed her car, overtaking her on the nearside. He clipped her wing mirror, causing a scratch. The defendant sounded her horn and Mr Wade mouthed the word 'Sorry' to her."

But as the cyclist moved forward when the lights changed, Cernuschi swerved into the back of his bicycle and he was flung into the road. "She then drove over his rear wheel, narrowly missing Mr Wade's legs."

Cernuschi told police she had acted in a flash of temper. Roger Offenbach, defending, said she bitterly regretted her actions.

## Man on Dillon murder charge

A 26-year-old man was last night charged with the murder of schoolboy Dillon Muller in an apparent drugs-related shooting in Bolton last week.

Dillon, 5, was gunned down as he went to a shop with his stepfather John Bates, 28, near the family's home.

Greater Manchester police said the man, who is from Bolton, would appear before magistrates in the town today charged with the boy's murder and the attempted murder of Mr Bates, who was shot in the abdomen.

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## Pensioners dig up coins buried to beat the Norman Conquest

By MARK HENDERSON

TWO pensioners exploring a Sussex field with metal detectors have unearthed a hoard of Anglo-Saxon silver coins thought to have been buried by a panicking merchant before the Battle of Hastings.

Bert Douch, 68, and Phil Collins, 67, both from Hastings, last weekend found 375 silver pennies from the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042-66). They made their find on a farm on the outskirts of the town and less than four miles from the spot where William the Conqueror defeated Harold II.

The coins, which were buried in a terracotta pot, are thought to be the most significant find of late Anglo-Saxon currency this century. Dr Gareth Williams, curator of early medieval coins at the British Museum, said yesterday: "Coinage minted by Edward the Confessor was still the dominant currency during the brief reign of Harold II, and the way it was buried suggests a response to a crisis."

"There were only two crises that would fit the bill: the rebellion against Edward by Harold's father, Earl Godwin, in 1050-51, and the Battle of Hastings in 1066."

David Bates, Professor of Medieval History at Glasgow University and the biographer of William the Conqueror, said the battle almost certainly led to the burial of the coins. "My instinct says 1066, as Godwin's rebellion did not touch the Hastings area in the same way," he said.

There was absolute panic and pandemonium in Sussex when William landed and ravaged the countryside to try to provoke Harold into battle as soon as possible.

"Any merchant with any nous would have done this. It's a classic response to would-be pillagers — bury your treasure and lock up your daughters."

Professor Bates and Dr Williams said the presence of any coins minted during Harold's reign, which lasted only a few months in 1066, would prove the circumstances of the burial. The coins already cleaned and examined are from the 1040s and early 1050s.

Dr Williams said the presence of "clipped" coins (coins which have had their edges pared) and coins from several different mints in the hoard indicated that it was the property of a merchant, rather than a nobleman's private treasure or money minted to pay an army. Hastings was a medium-sized town of about 1,500 in the mid-11th century, with its own market and mint.



Mr Douch and Mr Collins could make anything between £4,000 and £200,000 from the find, which they will share with the owner of the farm where it was discovered.

The law of treasure trove deems hidden treasure that is more than 50 per cent gold or silver to be the property of the Crown. A Treasury committee of experts sets a level of compensation for the finder and the landowner based on market prices for the objects discovered.

NEIL BENNETT

## Scots MP is facing suspension

By DOMINIC KENNEDY AND ANDREW PIERCE

THE Labour MP Tommy Graham is expected to be suspended by the party after describing Gordon McMaster, the MP who killed himself, as a drunkard.

Nick Brown, the Chief Whip, is understood to be recommending the action in a report, ordered by the Prime Minister, into the suicide. Suspending Mr Graham for his outburst would give the appearance of tough action but would fail to satisfy the clamour for Labour to widen its investigation to include alleged links between the party and Paisley drugs barons.

Mr Graham, MP for Renfrewshire West, was named on the suicide note left by Mr McMaster on the windscreen of his fume-filled car a fortnight ago.

Mr Graham told the Glasgow Evening Times last week: "If the real truth came out the guy had a drink problem."

McMaster inquiry, pages 8, 9

## Minister named in olives-for-peasants inquiry

By ANDREW PIERCE  
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

A MINISTER charged with modernising the nation's finances faces an unexpected Parliamentary challenge to the feudal bartering system he deploys to pay peasant labourers at his Tuscany estate.

Tory MPs, keen to cause some midsummer mischief, have asked the Commons to investigate the medieval payment system used by Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster General, at his Tuscany holiday home. Though

hardly in the cash-for-questions league, Mr Robinson definitely falls into the olives-for-peasants category.

He is being reported to the Commons watchdog for failing to declare in the MPs register of interests the luxury home, which he loaned to Tony Blair this summer for the second year running, and where the labourers are paid in olives in return for tending the groves.

The register of MPs interests says that second homes need not be registered unless they are regularly let for a substantial rent.

Mr Robinson, publisher of the *New Statesman*, who has five homes, is facing questions from MPs over the land at the imposing £3 million neo-classical house at San Gimignano.

A spokesman for Mr Robinson said that the minister had behaved within the spirit of the rules.

"Some of the land at Tuscany is worked. There is an olive grove. But people who work the land take it [the olives] in exchange for keeping the land tended. There is also grazing land which they can use in return for their labour. There is little or no

income generated for Mr Robinson with the exception of a couple of flagons of olive oil. He flits between the houses, which are not let, so the position is clear."

Last night the Tories seized on the unusual system of bartering to try to embarrass a rising star of the Government. Nigel Evans, the MP for Ribbles Valley, said: "What is the minimum wage in olives? This is a grey area. Which one of the properties is a second home and which one the fifth? I am referring it to Commons standards committee."

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# Detectionists turn up undreamt of treasure

Modern day equipment has given a boost to archaeology reports Mark Henderson

METAL detector enthusiasts such as the Sussex pensioners who discovered the hoard of coins from the time of Edward the Confessor have been responsible for some of the most important archaeological finds over the last 20 years.

Since affordable detection equipment became available in Britain in the mid-1970s, thousands of amateurs have taken up hunting for treasure, often with astonishing results. In 1992 Eric Lawes, a retired gardener, unearthed the Hoxne Hoard — 15,000 Roman gold and silver coins and plate — near Eye in Suffolk. He was looking for a friend's hammer in a ploughed field. Mr Lawes received a reward of £1.75 million from the Treasure Trove Committee, and his find is now in the British Museum.

The Middleham Jewel, a 15th century gold and sapphire pendant found by an amateur detectionist near Middleham Castle in North Yorkshire in 1985, fetched £1.43 million at an auction and is now in York Museum.

A medieval silver collar known as the collar of SS, found on a Thames mudbank in 1983, is now in the Museum of London, and a gold Tudor pin, eventually sold for £35,000, was found by an amateur in Farnham, Surrey.

Trevor Austin of the National Council of Metal Detecting said amateur detectionists had brought a new dimension to archaeology. "The Hoxne Hoard was found in a ploughed field, and the Middleham Jewel on a grassy plain," he said. "These are places that archaeologists would never even try to look."

Not all metal detectionists meet with the approval of the archaeologists. So-called nighthawks, who steal into



Phil Collins, left, and Bert Douch with the equipment they used to find a hoard of Anglo-Saxon coins in a field on a farm on the outskirts of Hastings last weekend

controlled archaeological digs under cover of darkness to remove artefacts without declaring their finds, have spoiled many important sites across the country. More than 10,000 coins worth as much as £4 million are thought to have been taken from a dig at Warmborough in Surrey after a small group of Celtic coins were discovered there in 1985. Nine people were convicted but fined only £2,000.

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport encourages coroners not to release details

of the locations of major finds to prevent nighthawks combing the area for left-overs. The 1996 Treasure Act, which comes into force next month, creates a new offence of failing to report a valuable object: it carries a sentence of up to three months' imprisonment and a £5,000 fine. The Act also widens the scope of treasure that can be claimed as Treasure Trove by the Crown.

Mr Austin said the nighthawks were responsible for giving a reputable hobby a bad name. "Their behaviour is

criminal and in no way condoned by the national council," he said. The council tells its members to seek a landowner's permission before looking for treasure, and advises declaring all valuable finds to a coroner, police station or museum immediately.

Metal detectors can cost anything from £50 to £700. Would-be detectionists also need a good pair of headphones, a trowel, local knowledge and "plenty of patience", Mr Austin said.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Hattersley condemns 'shallow' Mandelson

Lord Hattersley launches a scathing attack today on Peter Mandelson, claiming that he deals with poverty "like a door-to-door salesman whose merchandise is obviously second rate". The former deputy Labour leader also suggests that the social exclusion unit set up by Tony Blair to address inequality is merely a device to delay action to raise standards for the poor. Writing in *The Times*, Mr Hattersley dismisses a Fabian lecture by Mr Mandelson on social inequality as "depressingly superficial" and says he fears any policies would be similarly "facile". He adds: "No minister has provided a convincing explanation of why they [the poor] are not offered immediate help. Mr Mandelson talks quickly about something else and attacks his competitors for deficiencies which he has invented." Roy Hattersley, page 18

### Hate-mail man jailed

A man who terrorised two female colleagues at a McDonald's restaurant with anonymous hate mail was jailed for 4½ years yesterday, at Kingston Crown Court. Jagabandur Gill, 22, of Feltham, west London, a student who worked at the Staines branch of the restaurant, admitted sending out 10 letters, some by post and some by e-mail, causing his victims to suffer through the stress he had caused.

### McAliskey books ruling

Two books allegedly belonging to Róisín McAliskey can be handed to the German authorities before next month's attempt to extradite her on terrorist charges, Belfast Crown Court ruled. A 1995 diary and a provisional application for a driving licence, allegedly containing the handwriting of Ms McAliskey, were seized by the RUC at her home in Coalisland, Co Tyrone last year.

### Soccer blacked out

Live football shows in pubs on Saturdays is to end. The Premier League obtained a High Court order yesterday against one of the main suppliers of diverting equipment that enables television pictures of games beamed to Scandinavia being picked up and broadcast live. The ruling means the devices will no longer be sold and remaining stocks given over to the Premier League.

### Parade row man jailed

A black man who was asked to take part in a police identification parade, alongside white men with faces blackened by a make-up artist has been jailed for assault. Martin Kwanza, 43, a club doorman, was jailed for seven months at Sheffield Crown Court for attacking a customer. The parade related to a separate charge of blackmail, which was dismissed last month by a High Court judge.

### Drugs doctor escapes jail

A doctor who committed fraud to feed his drug addiction was given a 12-month suspended sentence by Manchester Crown Court. Brian Moss, 55, from Whitehaven, Cumbria, who pleaded guilty to seven charges of obtaining the Class C drug temazepam by deception, was saved from jail by the "glowing testimonials" of his patients. Judge Rhys Davies said: Dr Moss has resigned from the practice.

### Fewer cathedral visitors

The number of visitors to Canterbury Cathedral has fallen since charges were introduced in 1995. The charges have put the cathedral in credit, but visitors declined from 1.9 m in 1995 to 1.7 m in 1996, according to figures published by the English Tourist Board. Charges were originally introduced for financial reasons: this July the cathedral began charging on Sundays to ease overcrowding.

### Higgins stabbed in arm

Alex Higgins, 47, the former world champion snooker player, discharged himself from hospital after treatment for stab wounds after an incident involving a woman. Mr Higgins was taken to Hope Hospital, Salford, Manchester, with wounds to the right arm and abdomen, but walked out. Police found Higgins injured after being called to at a house in Swinton. A 34-year-old woman was arrested.

### Four get 7 A-grades

A total of four students gained seven As in this year's A levels, it emerged. Michael Brown, 18, a pupil at Bancroft's School in Woodford Green, Essex, and Richard Neill, 18, of Cookham Dean, Berkshire, both of whom are heading for Cambridge University, share the distinction of gaining seven straight As with Philip Croker, of Kingswood School, Bath, and James Williams, of King Edward's School, Bath.

### FHM overtakes Cosmo

The men's magazine *FHM* has overtaken women's market leaders *Cosmopolitan* and *Marie Claire* with sales of more than 500,000 a month, according to the latest half-year figures. *FHM*, recently voted consumer magazine of the year, has increased circulation by 178 per cent in the past year. *FHM* sells 505,000 a month compared to *Cosmopolitan's* 442,000 and *Marie Claire's* 435,000.

### Grandmother sets record

Jennifer Murray, a 56-year-old grandmother, arrived back in Britain as the first woman to have piloted a helicopter around the world. Having braved sandstorms, cyclones and volcanoes, Mrs Murray, and her co-pilot Quentin Smith, 26, landed in Denham, Buckinghamshire. They were cheered by crowds of well-wishers, including the Duchess of York, at the end of their 97-day trip.

## Unionists claim soldiers jailed to appease IRA

By MARTIN FLETCHER AND SHIRLEY ENGLISH

THE Government has been accused of keeping two British soldiers behind bars to appease the IRA before next month's peace talks.

Ulster Unionist and Conservative politicians attacked Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, after a Belfast court upheld her appeal against a recent ruling that two Scots Guards jailed for murdering an 18-year-old Catholic should be considered for immediate release. The Belfast Court of Appeal's decision means the soldiers are now bound by the decision of Dr Mowlam's predecessor, Lord Mayhew, and must wait until October before their cases are reviewed.

With peace talks due to begin on September 15, the fate of James Fisher, 27, from Ayr, and Mark Wright, 22, from Arbroath, is highly sensitive. The release of Paratrooper Lee Clegg during the last IRA ceasefire, after he had served just three years of a life sentence for murdering a Catholic joyrider, caused extensive rioting in West Belfast and severely undermined Re-

publican confidence in John Major's Government. In this instance, Unionist anger has been fuelled by the decision this week by Dublin to start releasing IRA prisoners early following last month's ceasefire, and by hints from Dr Mowlam that she, too, would consider early releases of IRA prisoners if the ceasefire holds.

Ken Maginnis, the MP for Fermanagh and the Ulster Unionist Party's security spokesman, said that Dr Mowlam was "so keen to have [Sinn Féin] in negotiations she's going to give them everything they want to make sure they come".

Phil Gailie, the vice-chairman of the Scottish Conservative party and former MP for Ayr, said Dr Mowlam had "capitulated to pressure from the IRA". She had "let down the boys and all the British troops in Northern Ireland".

□ Terrorists have attacked the homes of four past or present prison officers in 24 hours following riots by loyalist prisoners at the top-security Maze prison this week.

## Turkish gangs aim heroin sales at young recreational drug users

By RICHARD FORD HOME CORRESPONDENT

TURKISH criminal gangs are targeting young people in Britain as heroin users in an attempt to boost sales, according to the Customs and Excise.

The gangs, with members in northern Cyprus and London, are focusing on Britain because of a trend towards "recreational" use of the drug by non-addicts, who smoke it rather than inject it. But in an attempt to maintain street prices of the drugs, the gangs are manipulating the market by stockpiling heroin either in Britain or in the Benelux countries and only releasing it slowly.

One source said that heroin was now moving into the "rave" scene, where young people smoke heroin at the end of a night taking other drugs in order to bring

them down so that they were fit for work the next day. He said that some young people, who would previously have shunned the drug because of its anti-social reputation, were now using it because they believed wrongly that smoking was non-addictive.

The heroin market in Britain is dominated by Turkish criminal gangs, according to the first report of the National Investigation Service of Customs and Excise.

Les Beaumont, assistant chief investigating officer, said that many members of the gangs were British citizens with origins in Turkey. "The link between England and northern Cyprus is absolutely vital because there are so many people in northern Cyprus who operate with a fair amount of immunity from prosecution." Most of the heroin in

Britain originated from Afghanistan and Pakistan but was processed in Turkey before being brought across Europe to Britain.

Mr Beaumont said that Nigerians were heavily involved in the heroin trade as "professional smugglers" who would barter heroin for cocaine. They would take heroin to Latin America and bring cocaine back to Western Europe. The service is also having to combat the threat posed by a new source of Ecstasy. Most of the amphetamines and Ecstasy in Britain comes from the Netherlands but Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia are emerging as new sources.

Investigators believe that central Europe's emergence as a base for manufacturing Ecstasy is a result of chemists losing their jobs after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc.

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Epping*	£118	£59		Rugby/Northampton	£98	£49		Haydock	£118	£59	
Farnborough	£138	£69		Stoke-on-Trent	£118	£59		Hull*	£118	£59	
Gloucester	£118	£59		Stratford-upon-Avon*	£158	£79		Hull Marina	£118	£59	
Guildford	£138	£69						Leeds/Bradford	£118	£59	
Havant/Hayling Island	£118	£59		THE EAST OF ENGLAND				Leeds/Selby	£98	£49	
Hemel Hempstead	£138	£69		LOCATION	Usual 2 Night	OFFER 2 FOR 1		Manchester Airport	£158	£79	
Reading	£118	£59		Brenthwood	£138	£69		Manchester*	£118	£59	
Rochester	£118	£59		Colchester	£118	£59		Preston*	£98	£49	
Swindon	£98	£49		Peterborough	£98	£49		Sheffield	£98	£49	
				Stevens*	£98	£49		Thames*	£98	£49	
								Wakefield*	£98	£49	
CENTRAL ENGLAND								Warrington/Runcorn	£98	£49	
LOCATION	Usual 2 Night	OFFER 2 FOR 1						Washington*	£98	£49	
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# Pitbull takes on mistress of the soundbite

Giles Whittell on two fearsome lawyers who boast a string of high-profile clients



Fields: writes thrillers

THE two lawyers representing Kelly Fisher and Dodi Fayed have fearsome reputations in Hollywood for their skills behind the scenes of high-profile legal cases. Known to his rivals as "The Pitbull", Mr Fayed's lawyer Bertram Fields is famed for keeping celebrity clients out of court by negotiating pre-trial settlements.

Mr Fields, who was educated at Harvard, had a hand in arranging the \$20 million deal reached in 1994 with Evan Chandler, the father of a 13-year-old boy who accused Michael Jackson of molesting him. In his spare time, Mr Fields writes best-

selling thrillers. He has also represented John Travolta, Warren Beatty and Dustin Hoffman.

Miss Fisher's lawyer, Gloria Allred, 52, is likewise known as a consummate backroom negotiator who is seldom seen in court. She has represented the family of Nicole Brown, OJ Simpson's murdered wife, and has a popular liberal talk show on KABC, a Los Angeles station.

Gloria Allred has built her reputation and a lucrative career telling some of Hollywood's most visible men to stop behaving badly. Her

clients are usually scorned or battered women, unknown to the general public. But with a list of foes including Charlie Sheen, OJ Simpson, Imran Khan and Michael Jackson, she has come to personify the high-risk and often tawdry business of suing Californian celebrities.

The feminist has since acted for Britanny Ashland, a model who was once thrown to the ground and knocked out in a row with the actor Charlie Sheen. In a rare legal coup against a film star, he pleaded no contest to battery

charges and agreed to fines and community service.

Ms Allred, who once reportedly had a backstreet abortion after being raped, has been on television almost constantly in Los Angeles since taking on the cause of Denise Brown, the sister of OJ Simpson's murdered wife.

When Simpson lost his civil trial this year and was forced to dispose of his personal effects, the lawyer said: "The only thing I can see of value is the American football helmet... for any women who may date him in the future." Mistress of

the soundbite, she regularly fends off biter opponents more used to talk radio's traditionally conservative bent on her show.

The day before announcing Kelly Fisher's lawsuit against Dodi Fayed, she won a court ruling against Imran Khan on behalf of the heiress Sita White, in which the cricket-turned-politician was named as the legal father of Ms White's four-year-old daughter. "Mr Khan should recognise that no game of politics is more important than his little daughter," Ms Allred declared after the case ended.



Allred: talk show host

## Princess flies to Greek holiday in Harrods jet

By GILES WHITTELL IN LOS ANGELES AND EMMA WILKINS

DIANA, Princess of Wales, left Kensington Palace for a yachting holiday in Greece yesterday, using a Harrods aircraft for the flight to Athens airport.

The Princess boarded the Gulfstream jet, which was dressed in the store's gold and green livery, at Stansted airport with Rosa Monckton, one of her oldest friends. The Princess's choice of transport was being seen last night as an endorsement of her relationship with Dodi Fayed, whose father Mohamed Al Fayed is the owner of the Knightsbridge store.

Her decision to use the Harrods jet came as Mr Fayed, 41, denied claims from a Californian model that he had jilted her. Kelly Fisher, 31, the model who is suing him for breach of contract, was in danger of becoming an object of mirth in America as legal experts questioned the merits of her law-suit.

Through his publicist, Mr Fayed denied having been engaged to Miss Fisher or buying a house in Malibu in which they would live. He claimed their relationship was merely "one of friendship".

"He did know her and they had seen one another, but according to the best of my knowledge they stopped dat-

ing earlier in the year," Pat Kingsley, the publicist, said after Miss Fisher's tearful appearance at a press conference on Thursday night.

Ms Kingsley said: "He was not engaged to her, he did not promise to marry her. He had considered her to be a friend, who he had gone out with before. Earlier this year, in January or February, their relationship changed from a romantic one to a friendly one. Mr Fayed's attorney is going to answer the lawsuit next week and Mr Fayed will be denying everything that it says."

In a blizzard of flash bulbs, Miss Fisher had displayed a large sapphire and diamond engagement ring which she said the heir to the Harrods fortune had given her in December 1996.

The publicist stated bluntly: "She was given jewellery and gifts because they were seeing one another, but she was not given an engagement ring."

Mr Fayed, who for several days has been expected to arrive in Los Angeles on a business trip, has reportedly hired Bertram Fields as his attorney. He is renowned in California for defending clients such as Michael Jackson and the Church of Scientology in controversial cases.

Legal experts questioned the merits of Miss Fisher's lawsuit against Mr Fayed and hinted that an out-of-court settlement was by far its most likely outcome. "This sounds much more like a publicity stunt than a legitimate lawsuit," Laurie Levenson of the Loyola University Law School said.



Kelly Fisher, suing Dodi Fayed for breach of contract, claiming he jilted her for the Princess

Under Californian law Miss Fisher would have to

prove that she had offered legitimate services of commercial value to win a breach of contract lawsuit, Professor Levenson explained. She added: "Her sexual or emotional services won't meet that definition."

Miss Fisher, who has appeared on the front covers of *Elle* and *W*, is demanding legal costs, unspecified dam-

ages and \$440,000 as part of a \$500,000 payment she claims Mr Fayed promised her in return for scaling down her modelling work to spend more time with him.

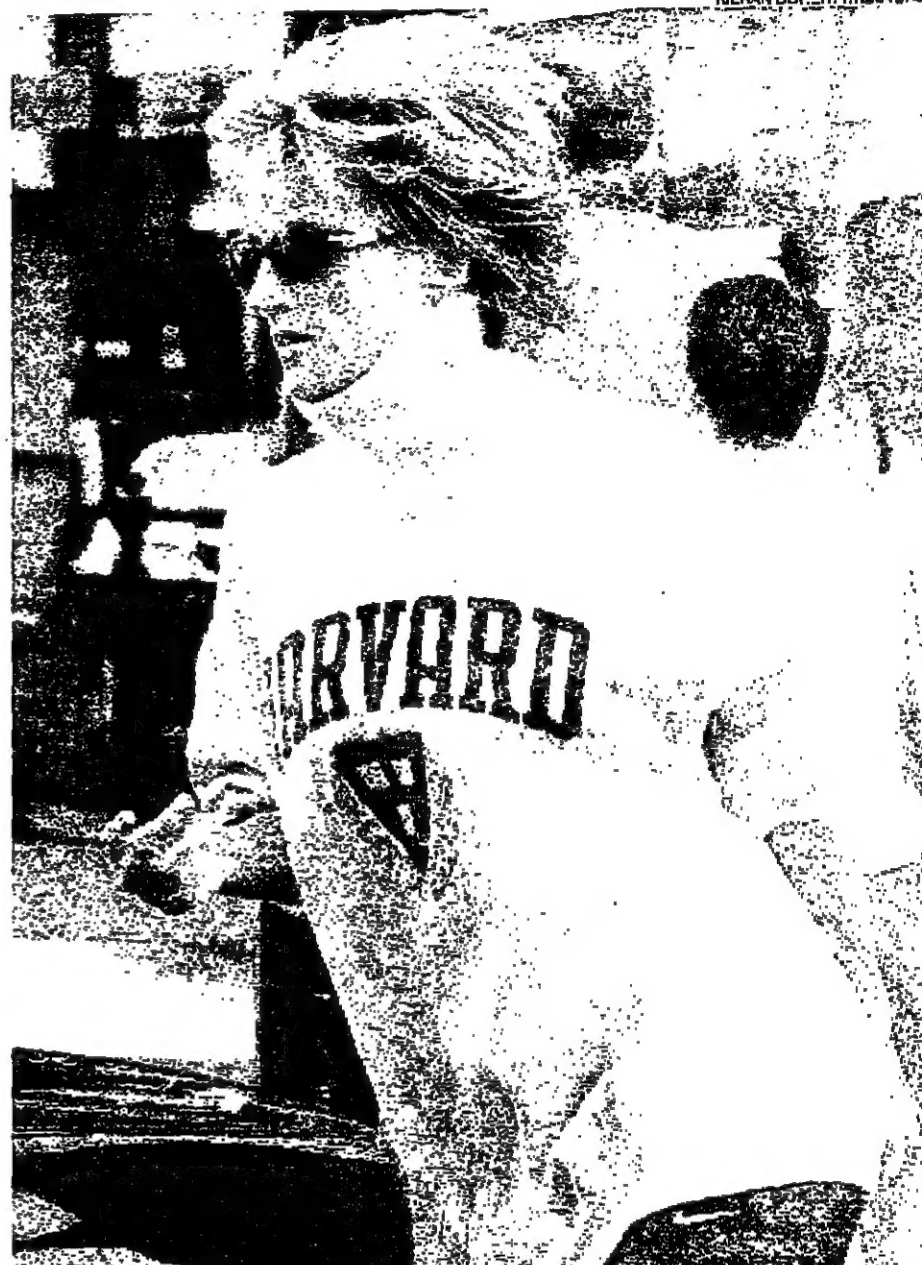
The model said in her lawsuit she had received \$60,000 of that payment, but a cheque for a further \$200,000 was returned by the bank with a note saying that the account had been closed.

Ordinarily delighted by local stories with even a hint of royal intrigue, the US media has greeted the Fisher lawsuit with much rolling of eyes and a little embarrassment.

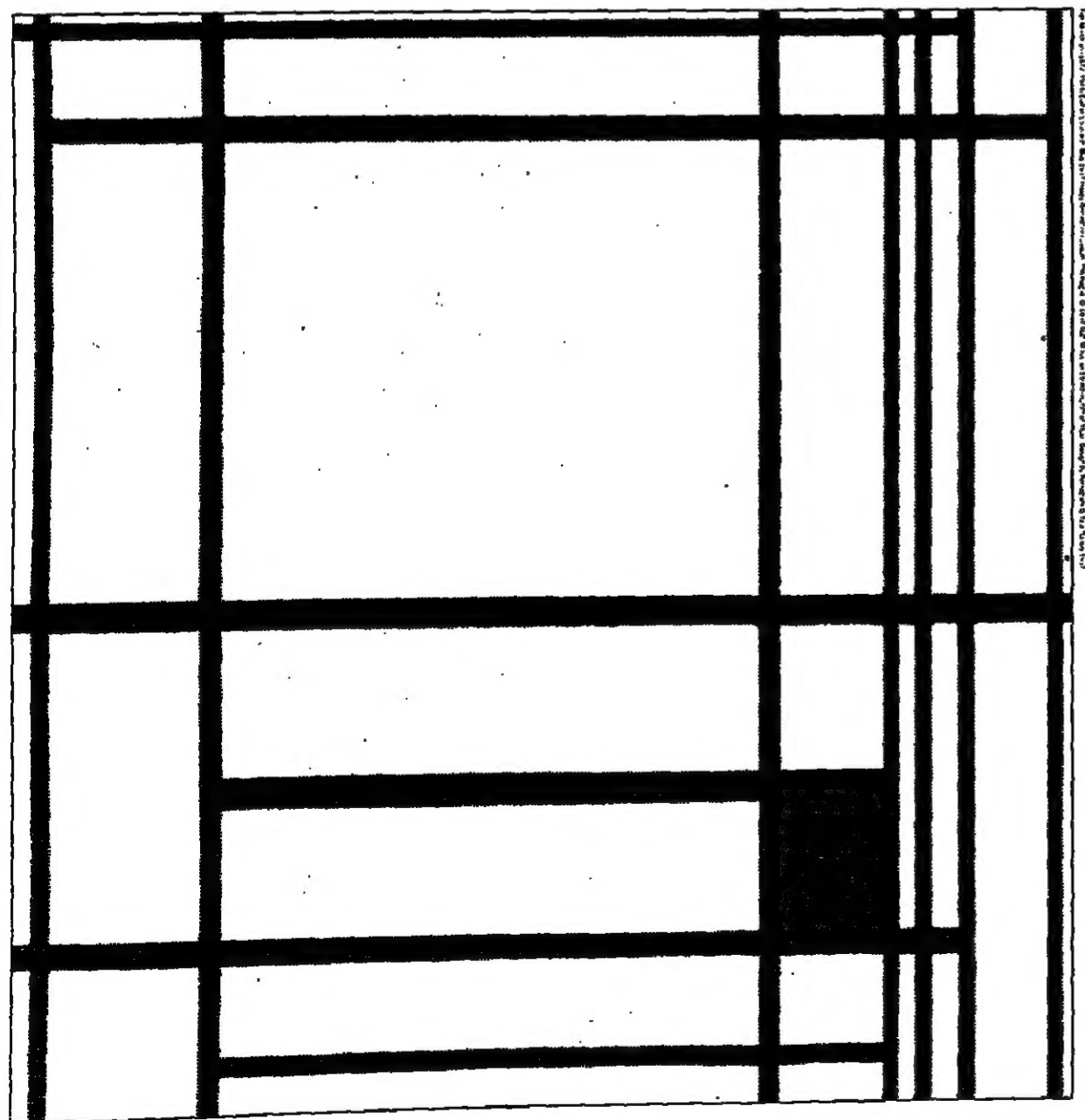
One journalist who attended Thursday's press conference held in Ms Allred's gleamingly white office suite was heard to mutter: "If this is news, then I'm the Queen of England."

The Princess, who dined with Mr Fayed at his Mayfair apartment on Thursday night, made an early morning trip to her gym in Earls Court, west London yesterday.

She is expected to spend several days abroad with Ms Monckton, who is the wife of Dominic Lawson, Editor of *The Sunday Telegraph*. She is also president of Tiffany's, the Bond Street jewellery emporium. The Princess is godmother to the Lawsons' two-year-old daughter, Domenica, who has Down's syndrome.



The Princess outside her gym in Earls Court yesterday



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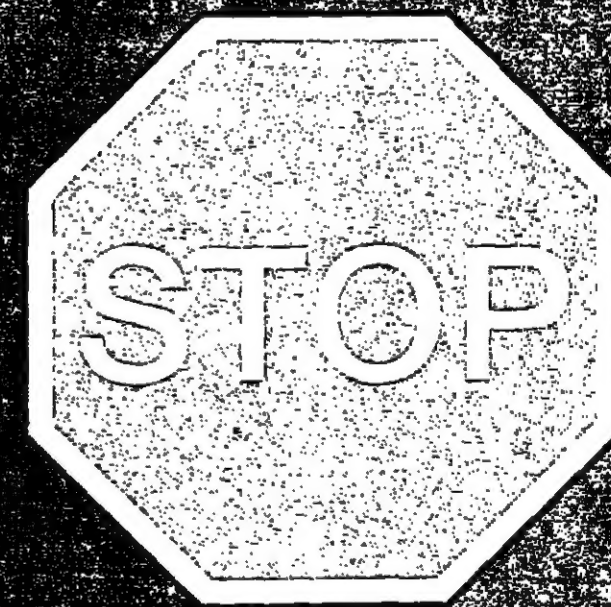
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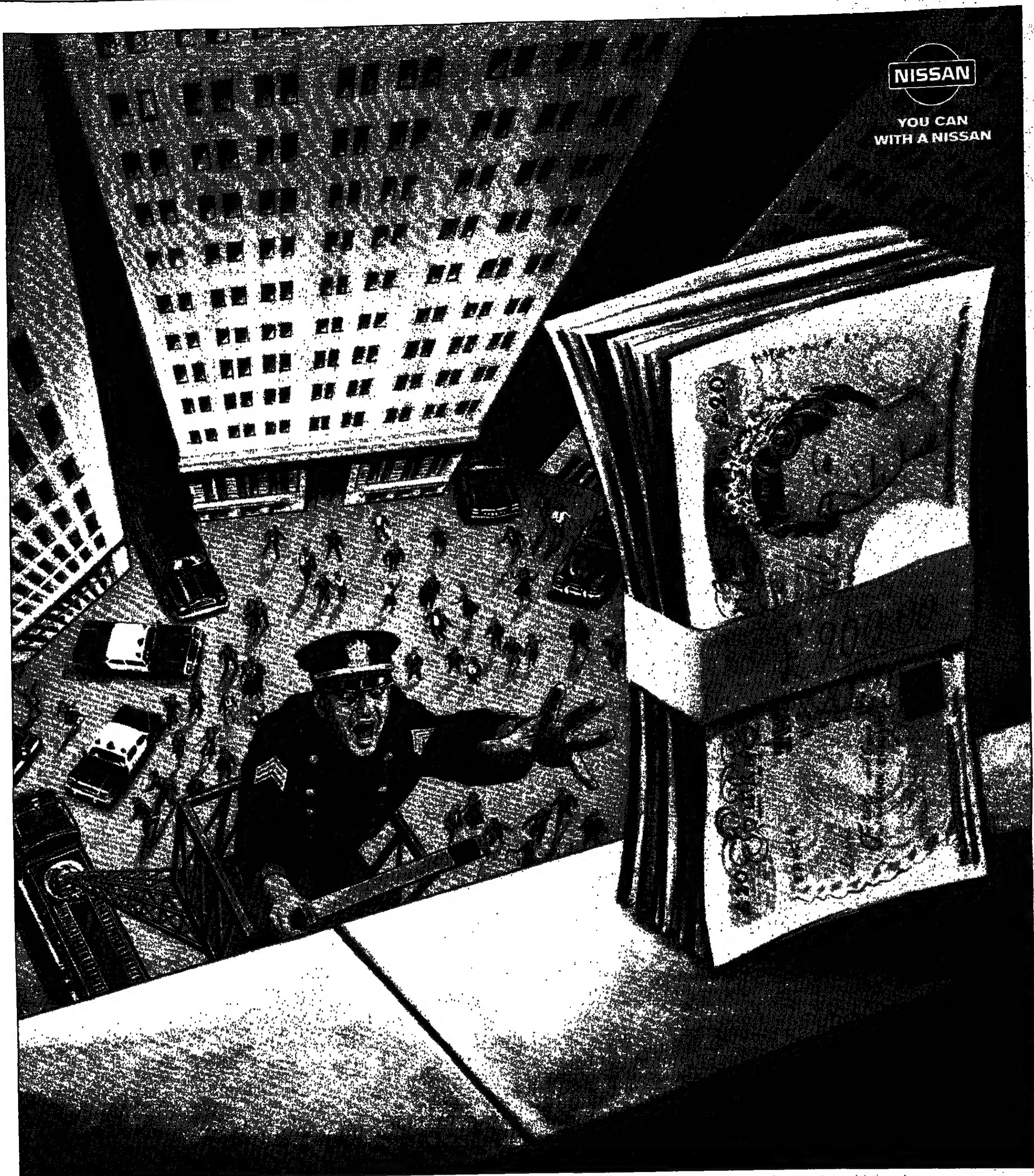
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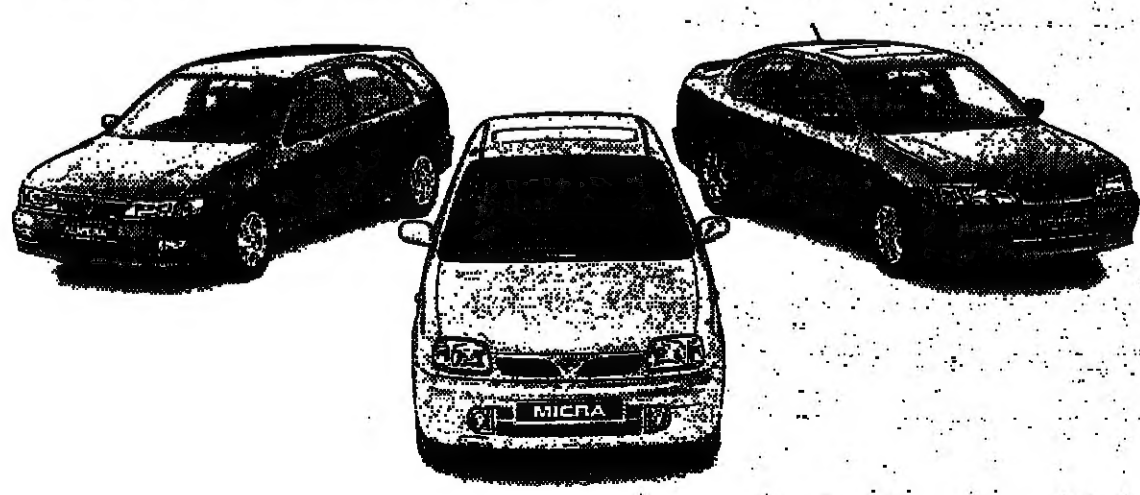




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# German cult fights order to quit

Stephen Farrell watches from a safe distance as evangelicals tussle with National Trust officials trying to evict them from Cornish beach

MEMBERS of the obscure German cult who invaded a Cornish beach to pray so close to the sea that they clashed yesterday with officials who posted notices ordering them to leave.

Bewildered locals looked on as 50 members of the Horst Schaffranek Evangelical movement demonstrated with officials, hammering possession orders into the sand at Loe Bar, between Helston and Penzance.

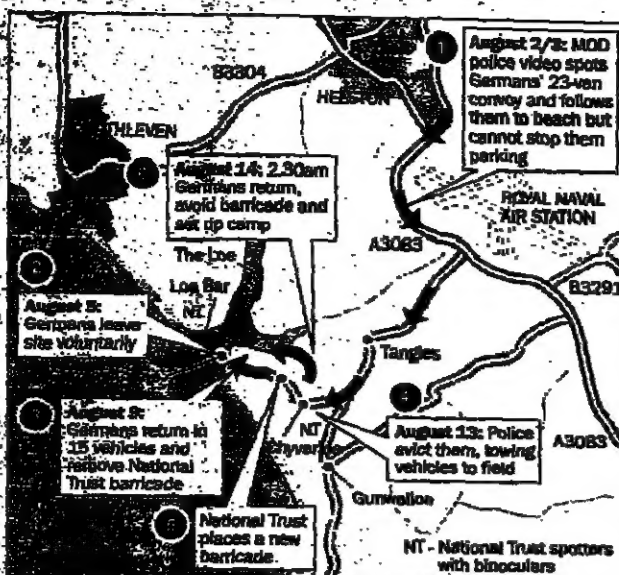
The confrontation came on the third day that the cult's camper vans and cars have occupied the National Trust-owned site, from which all vehicles are banned. The group refused to say when they would leave or if they would comply with an eviction order. They have already been removed twice after dismantling and driving around barricades erected by frustrated National Trust wardens.

Officials arrived at the site yesterday to post notices that the trust is to apply for eviction orders at Truro County Court on Monday. Cult members ran after the officials, grabbing the notices and shouting: "We don't want you here. Is God within you?"

The National Trust claims that the Germans have trespassed on the beach, which separates the sea from Loe Pool, reputed to be where Sir Bedivere cast King Arthur's sword Excalibur to the Lady of the Lake. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a breeding ground for the rare sandhill rustic moth.

The evangelicals are led by a grey-bearded figure in white cap and brightly coloured shorts who held prayer and discussion meetings beside Loe Pool at midday. He called himself Horst Schaffranek and was surrounded by apostles beside his camper van, which was the largest in the group and the most prominently covered in biblical quotations in Greek, French, Spanish and German.

Herr Schaffranek refused to be interviewed, or to give any information about himself or his group. He indicated only that they were displeased with their reception in England. As



The battle for the beachhead, above, and the cult members' response to police actions



Herr Schaffranek led the group in midday prayer and discussion, his followers said they chose the beach because they could find nowhere else to park their vans.

Dr Thomas Kopka, 49, from Bielefeld, said they had travelled from different towns in Germany to a peaceful spot to spend two weeks preparing for a meeting of international youth with the Pope in Paris next week.

He had taken two weeks off from his job as a telecommunications worker to bring his wife and two children to Britain, and found Loe Bar ideal until police arrived to evict them with, he claimed, unnecessary force.

"We travel a straight way for justice," he said. "I think this is a good opportunity for English society to think about its laws."

"We could not find another place to put all these cars. Penzance and Newquay are

large towns and it is not good for us to be in the middle of crowds of people. We can't concentrate. We need room."

He said that members travelled to Africa, Russia, China and North America preaching and teaching the Bible, and each had an independent role within the group.

The Evangelical Alliance, which represents 12 denominations, issued a statement dissociating itself from the group yesterday after consulting its German sister organisation. "We have been advised that Horst Schaffranek is not a mainstream Christian organisation and are regarded by some in Germany as a dangerous cult," a spokesman said. "They have a reputation as a group which disrupts large Christian meetings by shouting out messages and unfurling banners and posters in front of the preacher, preventing him from being seen."

Although most of the cult remained vague about their intentions, Frank Riemenschneider, 31, from southern Germany, said they had planned to leave yesterday because many had ferry tickets home, but wanted to stay to find out what would happen to their friends in court.

Their campsite consists of a dozen vans and cars, many daubed with Old Testament verses and placards denouncing the police and National Trust. Robin Howard, National Trust countryside manager for The Lizard, said that the vehicles were damaging Loe Bar's fragile topsoil.

Giles Cleworth, for the National Trust, said legal action was necessary because the cult had become "progressively more aggressive and intimidating" towards trust employees. "We did not seek confrontation, but we have to be firm, fair and consistent. We cannot allow camping and vehicles on our property."

Last night the camp was down to eight vehicles and 50 evangelicals, who sat in a circle singing and chanting. Police fear it could take until Monday to remove them all.

Neighbouring residents were mystified by the group. John Mills, 46, the chief executive of Cornwall County Council, who lives in the lane leading to the beach, said: "If there were just one small camper van nobody would mind, but this is overkill. It is a very delicate spot."

"We were troubled on our usual morning walk to see a Germanic lady with a builder's shovel emerging from behind the reeds. We all think it's a little inappropriate."

Angela Thomas, landlady of the Halzeophon Inn, said: "People here are quite amused. It all seems very exotic."



A cult member protesting outside Truro Magistrates' Court as five others were brought before the bench. Two were in jail last night for failing to pay court costs

## Two sent to jail for failure to pay costs

TWO cult members were taken to jail yesterday for failure to pay their court costs. The two men were given conditional discharges for two years after admitting offences at Loe Bar and were each ordered to pay £54 legal costs.

Because they could not pay immediately John Knuckey, the chairman of Truro magistrates, ordered them to be committed to prison for a maximum of seven days. They will be released as soon as the costs are paid.

A third man, who was jailed with them, paid his costs last night and was freed. A fourth defendant, a 67-year-old woman, was also given a two-year conditional discharge, but was not ordered to pay costs.

A fifth male defendant was remanded in custody after denying trespass. He will appear in court next week.

The four defendants sentenced yesterday were told by Mr Knuckey: "You seem to have a very low regard for the law of this country. Whatever the law is you have to respect it. If we go to Germany, we must respect German law. We expect German people to respect English law."

At the start of the 24-hour hearing two female members of the group sitting at the back of the court were removed by court officials after they refused to stand for the magistrates.

The four male defendants began singing in the dock when they were brought in and were ordered to stop by the court clerk.



Cult members studying the National Trust's possession orders on the beach. Several left yesterday but about 50 spent last night singing and chanting in a circle

## THE SUNDAY TIMES THE NAKED TRUTH...



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THE SUNDAY TIMES IN THE SUNDAY PAPERS

## Shiny new stars eclipse the rock dinosaurs

BY CAROL MIDDLEY, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

AGEING rockers can no longer compete with the new generation of pop stars and are being squeezed out of the market.

Veterans such as Sting, Phil Collins and Dire Straits are losing out to the explosion of new twentysomething talents such as Oasis, Cast, Kula Shaker and the Spice Girls in terms of album sales, according to research.

The 400-page study, by the consultancy Media Research Publishing, found that artists with careers lasting five years or more were responsible for only 29 per cent of Britain's best selling new albums between 1994 and 1996. That compared with 59 per cent in the previous three years.

Collins, Sting, Def Leppard and the Pet Shop Boys are named as acts who last year released albums that failed to match the sales of previous albums. In extreme cases the trend may pose financial problems for record labels that have long-term contracts with stars losing their bankability.

Robert Sandall, head of press at Virgin Records and a spokesman for the Spice Girls, said even relatively trendy bands such as U2 and The Cure, the cult Eighties indie band, had also been affected. "All these bands have taken a knock," he said. "It has been established within the industry for the last

year. Phil Collins was a particularly salutory lesson, although his tour is doing quite well."

"Any band that has had a career that has lasted more than a decade is looking a bit ropey. The Cure have been hit hard. Their last album, *Wild Mood Swings*, did very badly. No one really knew why, because it sounded like any other Cure album. I would say U2 are a borderline case."

One possible explanation is that older stars are failing to attract young fans like they used to. Radio 1 now gives over less air time to established stars and more to experimental music.

In 1992 only four of the 50 best-selling albums came from new artists. In 1996 there were ten.

Andy Lown, managing director of Tower Records in Britain, said: "Many of these rock dinosaurs don't realise that they have little to say to the young audience."

But a spokeswoman at East West, which represents Phil Collins, said: "You have got to look at a career over a whole lifetime. Phil Collins's career has spanned many, many years. We could be having this conversation in ten years and he will still be selling records."

A spokeswoman for Sting said: "As far as we are concerned Sting is a healthy, platinum-selling artist."

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# Show's over for agent who failed to pay TV stars

By A STAFF REPORTER

CAROLINE QUENTIN, one of the stars of *Men Behaving Badly*, wrote off more than £100,000 last night after her former agent was banned from working in show-business for ten years.

The maximum prohibition was imposed on Sharon Hamper at an industrial tribunal in Southampton at the end of a case brought by the Department of Trade and Industry's employment agency standards office. Ms Quentin was one of several celebrities including Leslie Ash, who also stars in *Men Behaving Badly*, Craig McLachlan, the actor, who appeared in *Bugs*, and Shaw Taylor, television presenter of *Police Five* — left badly out of pocket when Ms Hamper's company went into liquidation last year, owing more than £480,000. The four celebrities were owed about £300,000, the rest of the debts being due to other creditors.

Quentin, 39, recently described the amount she is owed as being "really most of the money I have earned in my life". In a statement, her new agent said: "In view of her former agent's insolvency there is no point in throwing more good money after bad."



Quentin owed most of her career earnings

Claims have been made on her behalf to the liquidator of the company and Sharon Hamper's trustee in bankruptcy.

The tribunal made two orders: against Sharon Geraldine Toms-Smith, known as Sharon Hamper; and against her company Sharon Hamper Management Limited, formerly based in Great Queen Street, central London. The orders prohibit either Ms Hamper or the company from being concerned with any employment business for ten years, with immediate effect. Equity, the actors' union,

said there were dozens of unscrupulous agents operating in the country and called for action to control the unregulated industry. It is estimated that 4,000 showbusiness agents work in Britain, the majority of them honest. But many had little or no regard for their clients' welfare, a union spokesman said.

"We recognised from an early point that the lost money would not be recovered — that applies to all the people involved with Sharon Hamper Management," the spokesman said. "But it is very positive to know that she will not be able to practise in any capacity."

"We have been lobbying for revisions to the Agencies Act 1973 and have now entered into consultation with the Department of Trade and Industry to tighten up the Act. We knew for four years before this case that Sharon Hamper was in financial problems. She had a very strong client base but her ethics were rather less than sufficient."

The department had argued that Ms Hamper was unsuited to running an employment business on the grounds that she was directly responsible for the agency's payment sys-



Sharon Hamper has been prohibited from working as an agent for maximum time

tems, and failed to pay clients their money. Evidence was also presented that the agency's client account was operated improperly, and that there was widespread withholding of money owed to actors.

The prohibition application was brought under the terms of the Employment Agencies Act 1973. The power to prohibit individuals from carrying on in business as employment agencies replaced the power to repeal the licences that were issued to such businesses.

Ian McCartney, Department of Trade and Industry minister for competitiveness, said he was delighted by the judgment. "These proceedings serve notice that the DTI will not hesitate to act against agencies behaving badly," he said. "This Government will not tolerate exploitation of people at work."

## Hypnosis 'can induce false memories'

Study sheds new light on 'recalled' sex abuse, reports Nigel Hawkes

PLANTING false memories under hypnosis is relatively easy, even when the hypnotised person has been warned of the danger, American experiments have shown.

The results throw new light on "false memory syndrome", in which people are helped by therapists to "remember" events from the past that never happened. Several cases of alleged sexual abuse have been thrown out after courts were convinced that the memories were false.

Dr Joseph Green, of Ohio State University, and Professor Steven Jay Lynn, of the State University of New York, carried out the study in which 48 undergraduates were hypnotised.

Before the session began, each was asked to select a night from the previous week when they were quite certain they had slept well.

In addition, 32 of the 48 were warned that hypnosis cannot make people remember things they would not ordinarily remember, and were read information about the imperfections of memory from guidelines published by the American Society of Clinical Hyp-

nosis. The warnings did not prevent people developing false memories under hypnosis. "The results suggest that warnings are helpful to some extent in discouraging pseudo-memories. But these limited warnings did not prevent pseudo-memories and did not reduce the confidence subjects had in those memories."

In a separate study presented at the same meeting, he showed that people who believed themselves to be hypnotised claim to remember things from much earlier in childhood. Dr Green said: "Many people believe that hypnosis can lead to earlier memories, although that has never been shown to be true. People's expectations about what hypnosis can do will influence what they re-

member." The accuracy of memories recovered under therapy has long been a source of argument. In April a report prepared for the British Psychological Society by Dr Bernice Andrews, of Royal Holloway College, London University, backed the use of therapy, suggesting that accurate memories can be recovered.

But her report was criticised as unscientific by the False Memory Society, which represents parents who say they have been wrongly accused of abusing their children.

Last December a 44-year-old man was formally acquitted of sexually abusing a 22-year-old woman after psychological assessments indicated that her memories might be false.

A researcher asked them if they had heard any loud noises at 4am such as a car backing or a door slamming. After hypnosis, they were asked if they remembered hearing a loud noise that night. Among those who had not been warned, 44 per cent said that they had indeed heard the noise. Even among those who had been warned, 38 per cent said that they had heard the noise. Green presented the results of the study yesterday at the annual meeting of the

People's expectation of what hypnosis can do will influence what they recall?

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Thirty women lady in

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# Thirty missing women could be 'Lady in the Lake'

Paul Wilkinson on the quest for a victim's identity

DETECTIVES trying to unravel the murder mystery of the "Lady in the Lake" have been given the names of 30 missing women who fit the description of the body found in Coniston Water this week.

Fifteen police forces contacted the incident room at Ulverston, on the edge of the Lake District, to check their missing person files with the Cumbria detectives. One name suggested by Merseyside Police is that of Helen McCourt, an insurance clerk from St Helens, who vanished in 1988, aged 22. Her body was never found. A man was convicted of her murder.

Experts believe that the body recovered on Wednesday by four amateur sub-aqua divers 75 ft down, on the lake floor, could have lain there for more than a quarter of a century. The woman was aged between 20 and 30, white, well-built, and 5ft 1in to 5ft 4in tall, with short brown hair. Her body was in a short, turquoise blue, 1960s-style nylon "baby doll" nightgown.

Yesterday, Miss McCourt's mother Marie, from Billinge, near Wigan, said: "I hope it is Helen's body, but I have had my hopes raised and then dashed so many times. We have been told that it could be a couple of weeks before the person's identity is known."

Cumbria police are also



checking the file of Carol Park, from Barrow-in-Furness, 15 miles from where the body was found. Mrs Park was reported missing years ago. She was 22 at the time. Detective Superintendent Ian Douglas, who is heading a murder squad of 30 officers, said that they were attempting to contact her relatives.

Mr Douglas added: "There has been a tremendous public response, with people coming forward with suggestions and information, which we are assessing now."

He hopes that forensic scientists will be able to obtain a DNA sample from the body. "It could give us a good lead in telling us who this woman is. If there are any family still alive we could compare it with them. It would be a big help in confirming the identity of this poor person."

Mr Douglas's team has asked forces to submit dental records for comparison with

the lady in the lake. The body will be X-rayed to see if the woman had borne children.

Forensic scientists have been helped in their task because decomposition was slowed by the low water temperature at the depth the body was found and because it was kept water-tight in two bin-liners, a canvas bag and a large rucksack or holdall, bound with rope and string. A metal weight had been attached.

The bundle was discovered by John Walsh, an engineer from Kendal, who was diving with his companions away from a training area close to the lake shore. They saw it by the light of underwater lanterns, protruding from the smooth bed. At first they thought it might be an outboard motor lost from a pleasure boat.

The nightdress is believed to have been made by a Manchester firm which moved to Essex in 1976. The canvas bag and the holdall are being examined for the identity of their manufacturers. "This is not like a normal murder inquiry where you can go at it full-speed straight away," said Mr Douglas.

"We have time to plan things out systematically. We are in the hands of the forensic experts to a certain extent. We must wait for their results."

## Staff backed after death



Martin Hollis: drowned

STAFF who were supervising a five-year-old boy who drowned during a day-trip were defended yesterday by the head of social services.

The body of Martin Hollis was discovered in a lake at Fairlands Valley Park in Sevenage, Hertfordshire, on Thursday evening. Ian White, Hertfordshire County Council's head of social services, said: "There is no evidence that any of the staff were anything less than conscientious. They gave him a bit of chocolate and wiped his face. They turned

round and he was gone." Martin, who lived in Letchworth, was on a day out supervised by two workers and a volunteer from the Noel Family Centre in Letchworth, which helps families that have difficulty coping with their children.

Martin's father Melvin, 41, said: "Martin was a lovely and happy little boy. He was loved by everyone who knew him."

Police want to trace a woman and child seen with a boy fitting Martin's description at about 2.30pm.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Man, 25, in court on body parts charge

A man charged with stealing body parts was remanded on bail when he appeared at Hove Magistrates' Court in central London. Niel Lindsay, 25, of Islington, north London, a former educational assistant at the Royal College of Surgeons, is accused of stealing anatomical specimens. He was bailed on condition he does not take employment as an undertaker.

#### Gas 'killed girl'

Police believe Jessica Downes, 13, whose body was found behind a pub in Oldbury, West Midlands, died after experimenting with butane gas. She had suffered a head injury. Two boys, aged 13 and 14, who were being interviewed, have been released on police bail.

#### Dirty video

A man whose dog was caught on a security camera fouling a grass verge was taken to Cheltenham Magistrates' Court, fined £120 and ordered to pay £100 costs. Patrick Dare was reported by the owner of the camera, sited on business premises in Chipping Camden.

#### Penguin deaths

Dublin Zoo is investigating the sudden deaths of all but one of its 12 penguins. Preliminary post-mortem examinations have been inconclusive. They died soon after their enclosure was painted, but sources said painting was a regular occurrence and the same paint was always used.

#### Lot of dough

Britons spend an average of £32.70 a year on ready-made sandwiches, and £55.20 a year on other chilled foods such as pork pies, according to Datamonitor. One in six sandwiches is bought at a petrol station. The £3.5bn-a-year industry is expected to grow by 5 per cent annually.



Lord Dummore, pictured with his wife, tried to save a colleague during fighting in India

## Modest VC who wrote himself out of history

By Alan Hamilton

JOURNALISTS covering war zones often take great personal risks and, occasionally, pay for their dedication with their lives. But there is only one known case of a correspondent being awarded the Victoria Cross, and it happened a hundred years ago tomorrow.

The nation's highest decoration for valour went to the man from *The Times* for trying to save the life of a colleague from *The Times of India*.

The definition of a journalist was perhaps a little looser then than now. Officers on remote battlefronts often supplemented their Army pay by acting as correspondents for newspapers which could not possibly afford to have a staff man at every outpost.

In August 1897, on the Northwest Frontier, the tribesmen were engaging in one of their periodic revolts against the British. Representing *The Times* on the expedition to quell the insurrection was a lieutenant in the Guides Cavalry, Alexander Murray, Viscount Fincastle. Reporting for the *Daily Telegraph* was another young officer in need of extra cash, Winston Churchill. During a fierce encounter at Nawa Kill in Upper Swat on August 17,

Lord Fincastle galloped with two officers and five men of the Guides to the rescue of Lieutenant T.R. Greaves, of the Lancashire Fusiliers and *The Times of India*, who was lying on the ground surrounded by enemy swordsmen after being disabled by a bullet.

Lord Fincastle had his horse shot from under him, but under intense enemy fire he went forward and managed to lift Lieutenant Greaves on to another horse. Sadly, Lieutenant Greaves was hit again and killed, as was another rescuer, Lieutenant H.L.S. MacLean, who was awarded a posthumous VC. Gentlemen of *The Times* a century ago would never have dreamt of writing about themselves, and Lord Fincastle's despatch to the newspaper made no mention of his own role. It was left to *The Times* correspondent in Simla to supply the full facts: "General Blood reports that Lord Fincastle, 16th Lancers, behaved with great gallantry at Landikalai."

Lord Fincastle subsequently became the eighth Earl of Dunmore, dying in London aged 90 after further gallantry, including action at the Somme, where he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

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# Chronicle of the death that spells

The suicide of the Paisley MP Gordon McMaster has put the party on the defensive over sleaze in its Scottish strongholds and threatens to overshadow the referendum on devolution, reports **Dominic Kennedy**

When Tommy Graham learnt that his name was on the suicide note of his young Labour colleague Gordon McMaster, he made a prediction: "I'll probably be the big bad ogre."

Mr Graham, the 21-stone MP for Renfrewshire West, is in deep trouble. Affidavits are being sworn saying that he not only called Mr McMaster a "poof", but that he described Irene Adams, MP for Paisley North, as a "hoor".

All the skeletons have come tumbling from his cupboard. His enemies have revived old claims of vote-rigging which led to two internal Labour inquiries. A murder trial this week threw the spotlight back on a dubious security firm whose directors included Mr Graham's election agent, Harry Revie. Even his purchase of a holiday cottage in the Highlands, which he named "Sunny Govan", has been attacked because he bought it from a council for £12,000 below the asking price.

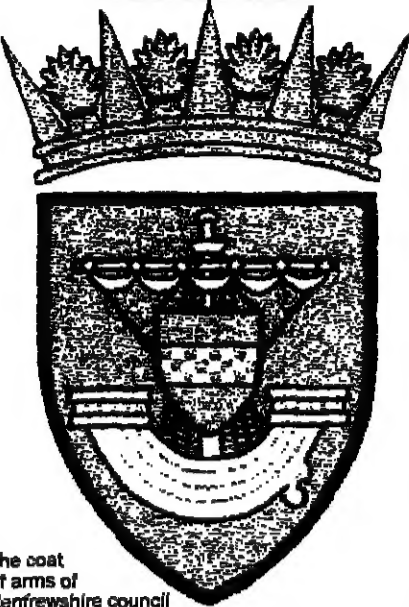
The danger for Tony Blair is that the skeletons of old Labour will come tumbling out too. The prospect of a by-election disaster in Paisley South or a referendum campaign being overshadowed by sleaze must chill his spine. Paisley matters because it may show that the cleansing of new Labour has not reached the one-party heartlands of Scotland.

The troubles for Mr Graham multiplied a fortnight ago when Mr McMaster was found dead in his fume-filled car. A suicide note on the windscreen was addressed to his parents, his brother and sister-in-law, Mrs Adams, Tony Blair and the Chief Whip, Nick Brown. It said: "I hope Don Dixon [Lord Dixon] and Tommy Graham can live with themselves. I would rather be dead with my conscience than alive with theirs."

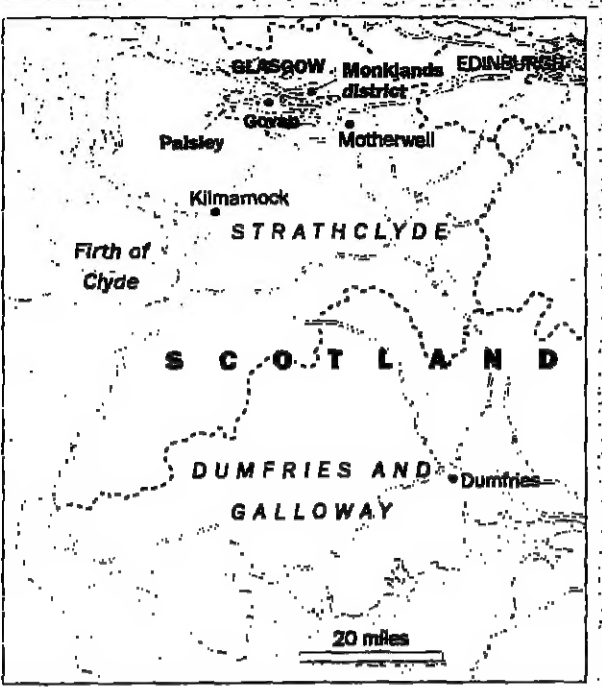
"I expect to go to Heaven, and I don't expect to see them there. But I do, I hope it's in a dark alley." And he added: "Even after I'm dead they will keep on bad-mouthing me."

Mr McMaster, a 37-year-old bachelor whose mother still cooked for him, was depressed. He said he

## A SAGA OF SCANDAL AND CORRUPTION



The coat of arms of Renfrewshire council



□ 1994: Labour Council inquiry into allegations of corruption, sectarianism and nepotism within Monklands council.

□ 1995: Scottish secretary orders inquiry into Monklands. Labour suspends all 15 councillors; internal inquiry clears councillors of main allegations but finds bad practice.

□ 1995: Internal Labour inquiry into allegations of a campaign to deselect Paisley North MP Irene Adams by "stuffing" the local party with stooge members results in suspension of constituency party.

□ 1996: Labour inquiry into methods used to secure nomination of Tommy Graham for the safe Labour seat of Renfrewshire West exonerates Mr Graham.

□ February 1997: Labour inquiry into allegations by Bob Gould, Labour leader of Glasgow City Council, that he had been offered the votes of fellow councillors

in return for trips abroad. Inquiry ongoing.

□ May 1997: Labour inquiry into allegations of bribery against Mohammad Sarwar, Labour MP for Govan. Inquiry rules that Mr Sarwar has brought the party into disrepute and withdraws privileges. Police inquiry into allegations ongoing.

□ 1997: ongoing Labour inquiry into allegations of smear campaign following suicide of McMaster.

□ 1997: police conducting two inquiries in Paisley, into potential links between Labour members and organised crime and the events surrounding McMaster's death.

□ 1997: police investigation into allegations of housing fraud in Dumfries and Galloway, involving the daughter of a Labour councillor. A council inquiry has uncovered evidence of bullying and bad practice in the housing department of the council.

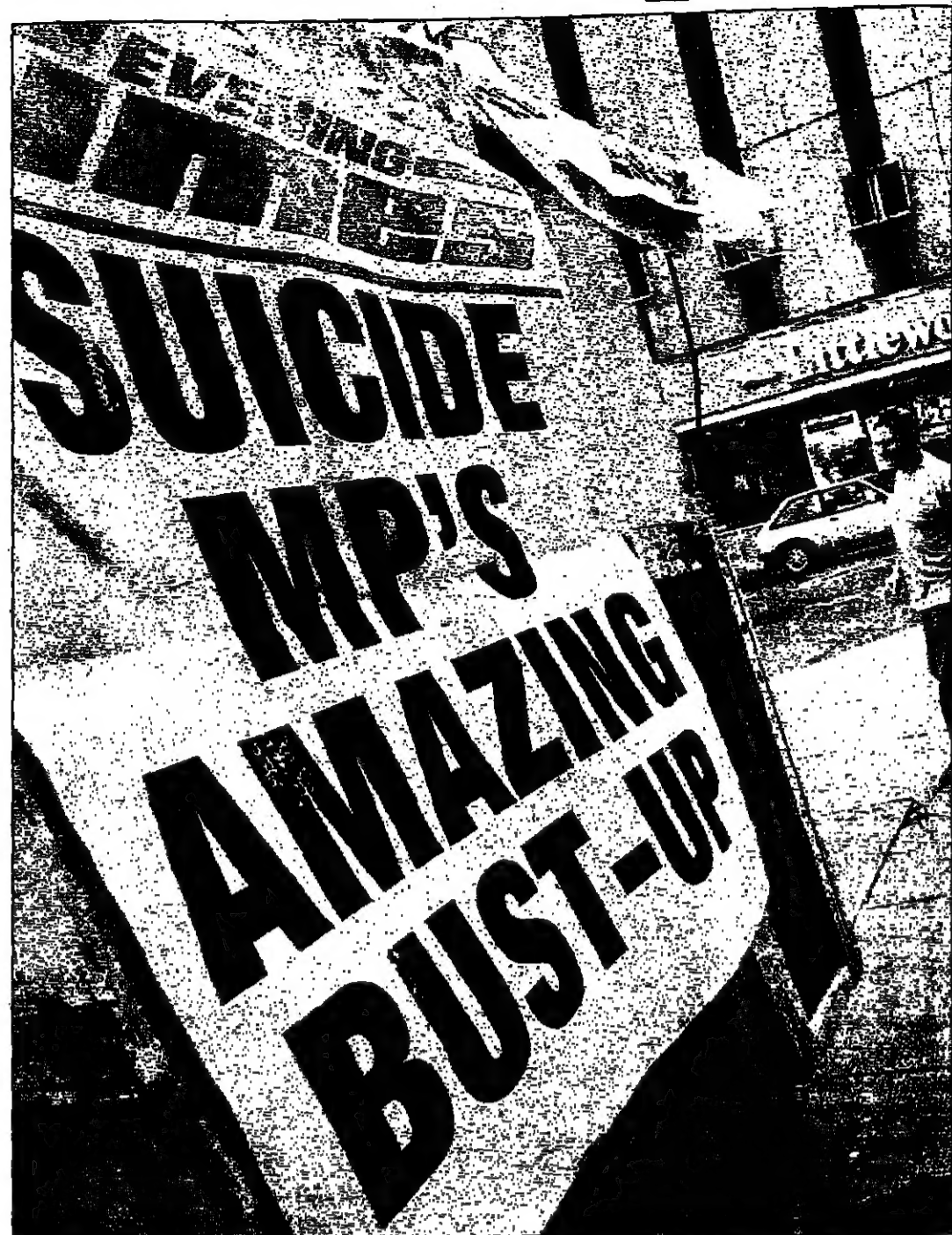
suffered from ME. He drank too much. And in June he suffered a badly injured hand when mugged in a London street.

But there were darker currents. The man who had been leader of Renfrew council at 28 and an MP at 30 had risen rapidly into the Whips Office before being demoted to disability spokesman. He thought

Lord Dixon was responsible for this move. Second, he was convinced that Mr Graham was behind a whispering campaign which led to a local newspaper telephoning him during the election campaign to ask whether he had Aids. Mr Graham has denied this.

Tommy Graham, whose career

Mr McMaster may yet posthumously destroy, was born in 1943 in Govan, the son of a carpenter's labourer. He became a machine-tool fitter at Kolls-Royce, joined the Labour Party and, by 1978, had been elected to Strathclyde council. Facing him from the Conservative benches was Anna McCurley. "Tommy was an easy-going, typical



Gordon McMaster's suicide note has led to an internal party inquiry into events in Paisley

kind of backwoodsman Labour, bit of a slob," she said. "Not well off — the wee wifie in the broon coat and the wean in the buggy."

In 1983 Mr Graham surprised everyone by swapped his fitter's overalls for the comfortable swivel chairs of the solicitors Robertson and Ross, under the job title of office manager. The firm represent-

ed many of his local voters, and handled industrial-injury compensation claims.

There he met Paul Mack, a young assistant hoping to pursue a legal career. Mr Mack is regarded as a sinister figure by Paisley politicians: he became a councillor and was once ejected from the chamber for calling an opponent a

stunuch. His name figured on Mr McMaster's suicide note.

Two years later, Mr Graham was selected to fight the seat of Renfrew West and Inverclyde, then held by the Tories in the person of Mrs McCurley. "When he was appointed as the prospective candidate, we laughed," she said. But on

Continued page 9

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# danger in old Labour's heartland



Tommy Graham in the Highland cottage he bought cheap from the council. The former machine-tool fitter rose rapidly to become a Labour MP at the age of 43

From page 8  
election night in 1987, it was Mr Graham who was laughing. The SDP alliance with the Liberals lost massive support and Mr Graham was an MP at 43.

"Parliament meant a good salary and a better way of life," Mrs McCurley said. "Once when I was down at the Commons he was there. All his chins were out, and the belly was out, and the smiles were there. He was talking me he had just dropped £100 at Annabel's or one of the nightclubs."

But the new lifestyle was soon to

be threatened by boundary changes. Mr Graham's powerbase of Linwood was about to be absorbed into the neighbouring constituency of Paisley North, won in 1990 by Irene Adams, widow of its previous MP.

According to Labour leaders, Mr Graham prepared to oust Mrs Adams. At the same time, Paul Mack had designs on Mr McMaster's seat of Paisley South.

If there ever was a hijack plot, it was clumsy and botched. Membership of Linwood branch shot from 57 to 199 in two months of 1993,

many of the newcomers being pensioners who had no idea of what they were joining. Suspicions were aroused; Labour's Scottish executive held an inquiry and closed the Paisley North party.

But no action was taken against Mr Graham. He bounced back when the Boundary Commission added to his constituency the overwhelmingly Labour town of Port Glasgow. He was to survive another internal inquiry last year.

But whatever the internal party skulduggery, it was taking place against the background of a drugs

war in Paisley between two rival families. The town suffered 11 murders in a year.

The drug wars had uncomfortably close links with the Labour-controlled Renfrew council. In 1989 councillors had set up a firm, FCB Security, supposedly to provide security guards for council and business properties. It was launched with £193,000 of public money. The council gave it a £300,000 contract without approaching any rival firms and without placing it on the approved list of contractors. It had two

directors appointed by the council, including Mr Revie, Mr Graham's election agent.

Mrs Adams' suspicions were aroused when constituents claimed that the security guards were dealing in drugs while guarding council property. She claimed that FCB money was being used to buy Labour memberships. She was supported by Mr McMaster and both MPs were given police protection after receiving death threats.

In November 1995, Stewart Gillespie, a local gangster, and other men wearing FCB uniforms burst

into the home of a local crime boss, Mark Rennie. Gillespie gave a colleague a handgun and told him to shoot Rennie. The gun did not go off, but Rennie was shot dead six months later. Gillespie was jailed for life last year for his murder.

Since Mr McMaster's death, the smears have continued. A Scottish Nationalist councillor told a newspaper that Mr McMaster had been having a relationship with an underage schoolboy, which the boy has denied. The SNP has suspended the councillor. Paul Mack told The Sunday Times last April that

Mr McMaster had HIV and was believed to have been cohabiting with a Spanish waiter.

As the vultures gather around Mr Graham, support has come from an unexpected quarter. Mrs McCurley, whose political career he ended, said of him: "He is in it up to his neck and he has got there just by being dumb. I never thought of him as a backstabbing, evil man." But she doubts he will survive. "He is," she said, "classic scapegoat material."

Additional reporting by Gillian Bowditch and Andrew Pierce

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Gordon McMaster, 37, MP for Paisley South who killed himself. A gentle giant popular with colleagues who warned whips that he was a suicide risk. He was persuaded not to jump into the Thames by a Labour MP the previous month. McMaster, a bachelor, he had admitted doubts to friends about his sexuality.



Tommy Graham, 53, neighbouring MP. One of the few Scottish Labour MPs who failed to attend McMaster's funeral. A member of the unreconstructed Scottish Labour, despised by Blairites. Damaged his defence in newspaper interview in which he described the late McMaster as a drunk.



Irene Adams, 48, MP for Paisley North. Exposed the whispering campaign against McMaster, was devastated by his death. Determined to have justice and revenge, is working closely with McMaster family to achieve her aims. Outspoken, but respected at Westminster.



Lord Dixon, 68, former MP for Jarrow. Taciturn former Deputy Whip, who blocked McMaster's path to promotion, which contributed to his depression. Wielding great influence, he was unapologetic for the decision; felt McMaster could not take the strain. Horrified to be named in suicide note.



Nick Brown, 47, Chief Whip, dubbed the Grand Inquisitor after inheriting the poisoned chalice of the McMaster investigation. Quietly spoken, has avoided publicity. Until now, was sent anonymous copy of the suicide note. Believes death unrelated to whispers. Arranged medical help for McMaster.



Paul Mack, 41, friend of Graham's since mid-1980s. Former rising star of local Labour Party. Desperate for Westminster seat, but dumped by Labour two years ago for assaulting ex-girlfriend. Plotted with Graham to oust McMaster and Adams so they could run Paisley together. Building site worker.



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**Martin Fletcher** says the decline of one of the toughest pilgrimages in Christendom is a symptom of Ireland's increasing secularisation

day during the ten-week season that ended last week, they used to need thousands of food parcels on the island. Today the pilgrims are thinner on the ground. From a peak of nearly 35,000 in 1953, and 28,000 in 1988, attendance has fallen to just 13,000 in another example of how even Ireland is growing steadily more secular.

Mgr Richard Mohan, the shrine's red-haired prior, cites "a decline in religious practice all throughout the country". He blames "the Celtic tide" — Ireland's booming economy — and a new wave of secularism, and a new wave of spirituality. He made winning the lottery today's equivalent of salvation. He also blames the Catholic Church, referring obliquely to the scandals involving paedophile priests and

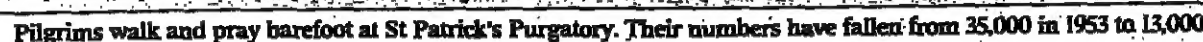
errant bishops when he talks of "things that have caused people to lose faith". But to those staying away he suggests that "something very valuable is happening here, that the experience of Lough Derg helps people get in touch with themselves and what's at the core of their being and things of real value". By testing the limits of their endurance they can grow.

*In a cave on the island in the fifth century, St. Patrick is supposed to have received a vision of purgatory as a half-way house between this world and the next. Pilgrims have been coming since medieval times. After the Reformation*

Today's pilgrims arrive on buses from Dublin or Sligo to do penance, give thanks, pray for miracles or search for peace of mind. Where the lone track across the mountains ends at the water's edge, old boats ferry them across.

Cameras, radios and mobile telephones are forbidden. All footwear must be removed – instantly destroying social status and revealing an amazing array of toenails. For three days the pilgrims eat just one meal of dry toast and black tea. They observe a 24-hour sleepless vigil, attend numerous services, and perform nine stations or prayer routines that involve endless barefooted circuits of the stony island while reciting 2,421 creeds. Hail Marys and Our Fathers. The midgets are often unbearable, and this filiation with purgatory costs pilgrims £16.

"If you put your trust in God



you can do anything," said Julia Callaghan, a widow from County Louth who has come 113 times in 33 years to pray for the Pope, the Church and peace in Northern Ireland. "It feels like hell when you're here, but you feel like heaven when you leave," said a young female graduate from

Tyrone, who had come to pray for a job.

For David Devine, a Strabane farmer, "this is squaring the account up" — a way of thanking God each year. Harry Eastwood, a retired car dealer from County Dublin, recalled an old belief that three visits guaranteed passage to

Heaven. "I've now done it 40 times so I hope things'll be good for me," he said.

Those are the purists, the truly devout. "Lourdes is a holiday. You book into a hotel. This to me is a real pilgrimage," said Mary Martin, a Dublin nurse. Tom Hanson, an elementary school teacher

from New York, is making his thirty-seventh visit. "It's always difficult. It never gets any easier, but you get a totally wonderful feeling..." But, confessed Margaret Humphreys, a Cork supermarket employee: "I am daydreaming about steak and chips and a nice bowl of soup."

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**W**e live in an age when so much is compartmentalised. Our popular slogan is: "Everything must be kept separate so as to do away with as much ambiguity as possible." Unfortunately, our penchant for clarity in all areas of human endeavour has blinded us to the fact that man himself is a being riddled with ambiguity. No matter how much we want things clarified, at the end of the day there are still more questions than answers.

We have estranged certain values that have helped society from times immemorial. Most scholars are inclined to say that science and religion are antithetical, or that anthropology, sociology, medicine and other disciplines should be given as much autonomy as possible so that their findings will be untrammelled by the influence of religion, especially Christianity.

But religion and morality are inseparable partners; they cannot be severed from society since they are intimately connected with how we live our lives and relate to the ultimate reality, or God.

However, in our post-modern society we have removed our support system, the entire fabric on which society was built, and we have fallen flat on our faces. We seem to have detached the religious dimension of human life from morality and expect to make a success story of our new independence. Thus, good and bad are only relative values. We are now ourselves the ultimate deciders of values, not minding whether there are values that predate us. We really need to look back to see whether we are better or worse with our newly won independence.

Christianity helped Western society to attain a high degree of morality, right up to the Victorian age. I am not saying all was perfect then, but for any keen observer it is a fact that morality has declined since the influence of Christianity waned in society.

There can be no denying that all is not well with society. There is no depth of soul or spirituality to help to stabilise and control our wonderful technical and scientific advancement. We need religion and morality to supply what is needed if we are intent on retaining our humanness, and even our sanity. While we leave open our doors to morality (which has become relative to us, no longer absolute), we proudly disallow religion from entering. *Before we know it, we are beginning to produce human monsters.*

The Rev Emmanuel Ogundele, 33, is the acting head of the department of philosophy at Sts Peter and Paul Major Seminary, Ibadan, Nigeria. Last year he was refused a British entry visa from Louven University, in Belgium, forcing the priest he was to relieve to cancel his holiday. This year he was granted a visa by the British Embassy in Lagos and is currently helping out as a holiday relief priest at St Mark's, Liverpool. Many Roman Catholic priests rely on holiday relief work abroad. Last week John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, intervened on behalf of six of Father Ogundele's colleagues studying at Louven, who were unable to obtain visas for Britain.

asked him what he meant by freedom. His answer was: "People are able to express themselves now more than ever. You can now dress the way you like, think the way you like and do what you want to do without any serious parental or religious controls. This was where life went wrong. Freedom, if properly understood, goes with responsibility. If a pornographic and erotic culture is freedom, then something is amiss. If children lack a sense of shame, respect, self-discipline, holiness, drug use, murder, corruption, perjury, mutilation, rape, incest, pedophilia, racism and hydra-headed immorality is freedom, then we need a rethink.

**W**e must think about what, in the past, helped society to be almost an exact opposite of what it is today. If we think that so be *without* God and religion is to be free, we are perhaps in a much greater bondage than before, because a life without God will be filled with something worse than God. We need a remembrance of morality and religion to help us halt the abysmal drop in the standard of morality in society today.

**At Your Service**  
Weekend, page 14



# The wheels come off centenarians' flight of fancy

EIGHTY sprightly centenarians flew into London yesterday in what is thought to be the world's largest gathering of 100-year-olds. Armed with wheelchairs and walking sticks, they arrived at City Airport for a special sightseeing tour and lunch.

Many of the party, including some of the Britons who had flown to Belgium on Thursday to meet their fellow centenarians, had never been in an aeroplane before. Mary Ellen from Newcastle upon Tyne, who was born in 1894, thought it "the best way to travel... I've loved every minute". She now considered herself an old hand. "Can't wait for next time".

It could be there won't be a next time. The day turned into something of a shambles when the sightseeing tour ran out of time and lunch at the Marlborough Hotel had to be cut short so that the party could get back to the airport in time.

The trip was dreamt up by Freddy Van Gaster, the managing director of the Belgian airline VLM, when he heard that his secretary's centenarian mother had never flown before. Together with Sabena, he set about

**Kathryn Knight follows a group of 100-year-olds whose first time in an aeroplane could be their last**

organising the gathering. The group were accompanied by relatives and carers. One relative, who did not wish to be named, said: "We are not very happy. My mother has travelled from Durham to London and will be going back to Durham, all in around 36 hours. She didn't even get to see Antwerp and she was disappointed that there was no time for a coach tour in London today."

The centenarians did hear a personal message from Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother at lunch. Most of the British contingent were quietly proud that the Queen Mother, a mere 97, was not old enough to join them.

Ann Harris, from Kent, had a message for her: "I've had to work hard all my life. But a bit of good living and a good healthy belly does you no harm."

Robbie Burns, a 101-year-old from Glasgow, was no stranger to flying. The last remaining Cameron Highlander who fought in the First World War, including the Battle of the Somme, he has travelled round the world twice since his wife died 30 years ago. Asked if he was enjoying himself, he replied with a wink: "It's all free, isn't it?"

The centenarians had gathered in an hotel in Antwerp on Thursday night to prepare for their flight to London. "They had quite a knees-up," said Elaine Finch, from the servicemen's charity, SSAFA, who sponsored the English contingent. "Some of their children had to go to bed before them because they couldn't take the pace."

However, after things started to go wrong yesterday, a spokeswoman for the charity said they were unhappy with the arrangements and did not think the experience would be repeated.



Maria During from Belgium, aged 101, waiting to be helped from the aircraft at City Airport yesterday. From there the trip went downhill

## Rail firms told to answer calls

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

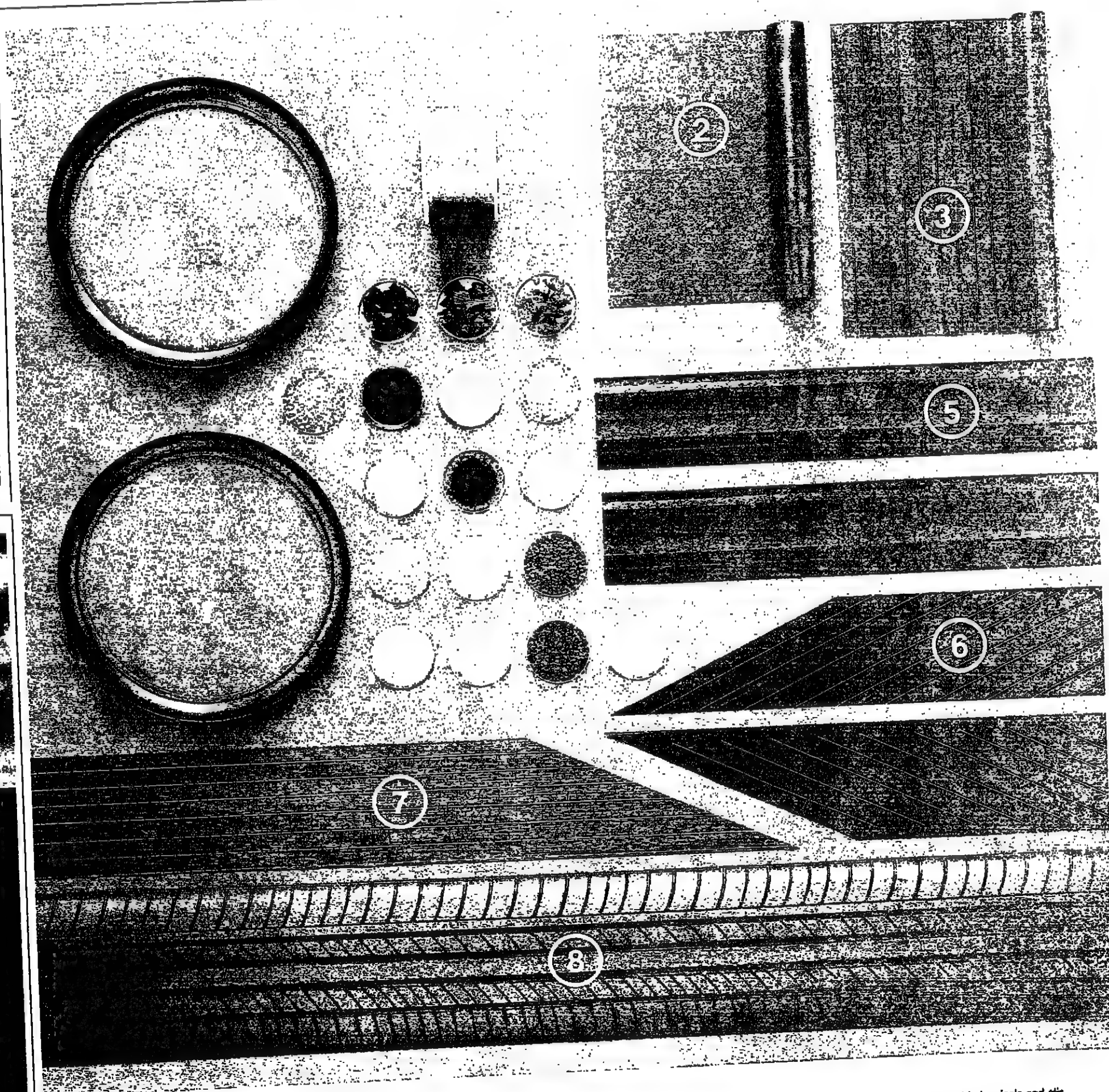
RAIL companies will be fined more than £400,000 next month unless they improve their telephone inquiry service. The rail regulator said yesterday that too many calls were going unanswered and gave train operators four weeks to meet targets.

John Swift issued an enforcement order requiring train operators to answer nine in ten calls by September 14. If the train companies, who jointly run the national service, fail to improve on their current 82 per cent response rate, they face a total fine of £450,000. Should there be a decline in the standard of service, which he found to have improved, they could face fines of more than £1 million.

Management consultants said that the target fell well below standards elsewhere in the private sector. Many com-

panies set targets of answering 90 per cent of calls within 15 seconds. The rail regulator sets no time limit, although unanswered calls are generally automatically cut off after three minutes. David Naylor, of TSC Europe, said: "Simply setting a target for answering the telephone is only scratching the surface. You have to know what happens when the call is answered, what information is given, how long is spent with the customer and many other issues."

The rail regulator plans to set tougher targets for companies once they succeed in answering nine out of ten calls, pushing for 95 per cent of those calls to be answered within 30 seconds. Mr Swift has also set up an investigation into the quality of service; the results will be published next month.



## MOST GERMAN RECIPES PRODUCE TOUGH, INEDIBLE RESULTS. THIS ONE IS NO EXCEPTION.

Ask a German for his favourite recipe and you won't be surprised if it's inedible. Nevertheless, we bring you this highlight from the Continental tyre engineers' recipe book. At least you know this dish is meant to be rubbery.

1. First make your basic rubber compound using natural and synthetic rubber, sulphur, resin, aromatic oil, carbon black, stearic acid, cobalt stearate, wax and a unique blend of vulcanisation and anti-oxidant chemicals. These are probably not the sort of ingredients you have at home - unless you're a Continental tyre engineer. Mix, then test (but don't taste) for consistency.

2. Make an airtight inner liner by rolling butyl rubber into a wide thin layer and trim. This will ensure your tyre rises nicely and doesn't go flat.

3. In a calendaring machine, make body plies to form the tyre's carcass. The carcass gives the tyre its strength and also cushions you, even on roads lumpier and bumpier than German custard.

4. With brass-coated steel cords, form a circle to make the tyre 'beads'. These will make sure your tyre sits securely on the wheel rims.

5. Take two strips of rubber and form the outer sidewalls. These protect tyres from

bangs and scrapes, and the chemicals added earlier help reduce the harmful effects of ozone and the sun. (Our engineers hate to see their pride and joy looking anything less than perfect.)

6. Now cover brass-coated steel with rubber to make belt plies. Place under the tread, to provide longer life and a better shape. Not what you normally associate with German cooking.

7. Make the cap plies by embedding nylon in rubber to form a bandage over the belt plies and under the tread. This improves high speed handling and stability.

8. To make the tread, add chemicals and stir into the basic rubber compound. Heat and pass through an extruder.

You'll now need your tyre building machines. Combine the bead, inner liner, carcass, sidewalls, belt plies and tread. Spray the outside of the tyre with lubricant and the inside with silicon.

Place in a vulcanising mould and cook for 10 minutes at 150°C and 12 bar of pressure. Remove and leave to cool. You've now made a very tasty Continental tyre.

Of course, if you can't be bothered with all the preparation, you can always get a take-away from your local tyre dealer.

**Continental**



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# Iran sought Pretoria nuclear deal

FROM INIGO GILMORE  
IN JOHANNESBURG

IRAN has tried to buy items needed for the production of nuclear weapons from South Africa.

A detailed shopping list, presented to the head of South Africa's Atomic Energy Corporation, by Reza Amrollahi, Iran's Deputy Minister of Atomic Affairs, was rejected by stunned officials, according to a report to be published in a British defence magazine.

Dr Waldo Stumpf, head of the corporation, said he was handed a file after a meeting that took place

early last year in Pretoria near Johannesburg. "It contained a comprehensive list of items needed for manufacturing nuclear weapons," he said. "There were some very advanced things asked for: blueprints, industrial, chemical and laboratory equipment, and other essentials required for the production of weapons of mass destruction."

Dr Stumpf told the Iranian minister that, in accordance with the provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, under no circumstances could he or members of his staff comply.

R.F. "Pik" Botha, then the Minister

of Energy Affairs, has confirmed he attended the meeting, which was apparently organised by President Mandela's office, the September issue of *Jane's International Defence Review* says. The report mentions that South Africa, a de facto nuclear power, was a key destination on Iran's worldwide shopping trip for nuclear technology which also took its officials to Ukraine and Central Asian countries.

It says Tehran has made "considerable progress" in its quest towards developing nuclear weapons. Quoting South African Defence Force officials, it reveals that an undis-

closed number of technicians made redundant by the scrapping of the South African nuclear programme have been hired by Iran.

South Africa has stopped manufacturing weapons-grade uranium, but still retains wide expertise in the field of nuclear technology. Even though the Iranians apparently left empty-handed, news of the meeting will raise concern over Iran's efforts to obtain nuclear weapons.

It has also cast a spotlight on Iran's manipulation of the close relationship it has developed with South Africa to the chagrin of the United States. South Africa buys two thirds

of its oil from Iran. The United States last year expressed its displeasure over the red-carpet treatment that was afforded to a high-profile delegation of visiting Iranian government officials.

Weapons sales: Congo-Brazzaville government troops are using South African armoured vehicles, rockets, mortars and other materiel described by Pretoria as non-lethal. The South African weekly *Mail and Guardian* interviewed unnamed French sources in Paris who said the weapons included multiple-rocket launchers delivered to Pointe-Noire. (AFP)

## Anniversary in India sees outpouring of despair on corruption

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS  
IN DELHI

INDIA awoke on its 50th anniversary yesterday to an unrepentant outpouring of despair, in the editorial columns of practically every newspaper, echoing in sometimes brutal language the sense of failure and betrayal that are felt across much of South Asia, home to one fifth of humanity.

What should have been a day to celebrate turned into an occasion of lamentation. The tone was set by Inder Kumar Gujral, the Prime Minister, whose call for a mass movement to fight corruption in politics and the bureaucracy touched the country's rawest nerve.

Every Indian is affected by corruption: the police, politicians and most civil servants are despised for making life almost impossible. Some of the nation's best known politicians face corruption charges, although it is rare for powerful political figures to go to jail or lose their ill-gotten fortunes. Editorial writers are unanimous in declaring that corruption is now so rampant it directly threatens democracy.

Mr Gujral, known for his integrity, called corruption a curse on the country, poisoning politics and making life



harder for ordinary Indians. Everyone should refuse to pay bribes and to report those asking for them, even if they were members of his Cabinet.

The *Times of India* said in a front-page commentary that the dream of 50 years ago had become a nightmare. Idealism had been replaced by cynicism. The pursuit of power had blinded politicians, whose disregard for values and decency was matched by greed and untamed ambition.

The theme was pursued in the paper's editorial column, which noted that a third of the country's population subsisted below the poverty line and more than 20 million children were enslaved in bonded employment, often in life-threatening conditions. "A disgust with politics as it is practised appears to be taking root in a soil increasingly receptive to the seeds of authoritarianism by any other name," it said.

The *Hindu* noted that a commitment to democracy had, for the most part, been India's greatest strength, but went on to declare that the "years with destiny" proclaimed by Jawaharlal Nehru 50 years ago had not been fulfilled. It said 350 million people lived in poverty and 450 million were illiterate. "Confronting the squalid reality of these figures 50 years later, it is clear that the Indian state still faces the primary test of its moral authority in demonstrating a capacity and will to overcome these grim problems."

A columnist in *The Pioneer* spoke of the stark, numbing reality of all-pervasive despair on the nation's 50th anniversary.



Gujral addressing the nation yesterday



Some of the hundreds of youngsters who joined a Delhi protest against child labour

ry. "The descent from the sunlit peak of 1947 to the dark depth of 1997 is too shocking to be shrugged off casually. It is not only a sad commentary on the use we have made of 50 years of freedom but has very disturbing implications for the future."

The *Hindustan Times* acknowledged that there were plenty of failures, but noted: "This country has shown to the world that poverty and illiteracy and a population of bewildering plurality are not antithetical to sustaining a vibrant democracy with all freedoms, especially the freedom of thought and expression." India had built an industrial base capable of matching many developing economies of the world. It had the third largest scientific and technological manpower and was a member of the exclusive

clubs of nuclear and space "haves". It insisted, unique among yesterday's papers, that the country had fulfilled its trust with destiny.

Guwahati: Six people were killed in India's northeastern region in scattered incidents of violence, and separatists led a general strike coinciding with independence celebrations, police said yesterday.

Separatist guerrillas shot four people dead in three overnight attacks in Assam, according to police in the state's biggest city, Guwahati. Separatist militants also blew up a bridge in the central section of the state and set fire to a small railway station on the main track connecting the region with the rest of India. Tribal guerrillas killed two Bengali-speaking Hindus at Teliamura in Tripura on Thursday night, while six

separatist groups in Tripura, Assam, Manipur and Nagaland states called last month for a general strike on Independence Day and a boycott of celebrations marking 50 years of freedom from British rule.

Two tribal groups demanding that separate provinces be carved out of Manipur and Tripura joined the strike.

In other developments, two bomb blasts occurred in Nagaland, but no one was injured, the Press Trust of India reported. One of the explosions occurred minutes after the state's Chief Minister gave an Independence Day speech. "Life is normal in all parts of the state," Nepal Das, a senior police official, said in Agartala, Tripura's capital. He said paramilitary troops had been deployed in the state. (Reuters)

Letters, page 19

## Dhaka students burn plotters' effigies

FROM AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
IN DHAKA

STUDENTS yesterday burnt effigies of five alleged plotters of the 1975 coup in which Bangladesh's founder, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was killed, as a report said ten suspected fugitives had been tracked down.

The demonstrations came as Bangladesh mourned its slain leader, assassinated 22 years ago to the day. Tens of thousands of tearful mourners streamed to the home — now a museum — and the grave of Sheikh Mujibur in his family village of Tangipara, 70 miles from the capital. They placed wreaths or just a flower in both places.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed ac-

companied the slain leader's daughter, the Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina Wajed, to place wreaths at the foot of his portrait in the museum as a military band played the *Last Post*. The red-and-green national flag flew at half mast and many places flew black flags in memory of the man who led the country to independence from Pakistan in 1971.

Students at Dhaka University set fire to effigies of five of the alleged coup plotters, demanding that they be tried by a special tribunal. "Keeping the self-confessed killers untried for the past two decades was the root cause of terrorism and anarchy in the country and the trial will end that," Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, a teacher and leader of an anti-fundamentalist group, said. Hun-

dreds of students watched as the effigies of retired army officers Farooq Rahman, Badul Huda, Shariful Huq Dalmi, Abdur Rashid and Shahrier Rashid Khan went up in flames while riot police stood by. The *Sangbad* and *Bhorer Kagoj* newspapers, quoting unidentified official sources, said ten of those wanted in connection with the coup had been traced; four others were in hiding.

The trial of the 19, accused of taking part in the August 15, 1975, coup opened in January, but only five are in court with the rest being tried in absentia.

Yesterday reports claimed that one of the key plotters of the putsch was in Britain. Other suspects were hiding in Canada, the United States, Germany, Zimbabwe, Libya and Hong Kong.



Sheikh Mujibur: flags flown in his memory

## Democracy campaigners attack new election law in Hong Kong

FROM REUTERS  
IN HONG KONG

THE China-backed Hong Kong Government yesterday published a new election law that will curtail democracy in the former British colony. The move provoked condemnation from pro-democracy activists.

Revealing the draft election law for the first time, Michael Suen, the Constitutional Affairs Secretary, said the public should not be "petty-minded" over the issue of only one-third of the 60-seat Provisional Legislature being returned by geographical constituencies in next May's polls.

The remaining 40 seats will be filled by representatives from business and professional bodies in so-called function-

al constituencies, and by an election committee made up of pro-China politicians, businessmen and professionals.

"Whatever else regarding the election committee, the functional constituencies, I do look upon them as expedients — transient arrangements which will not last," Mr Suen told a news conference. "Our main focus should be on direct election."

He said the Government would present the draft law to the China-annointed Provisional Legislature next Wednesday, hoping it would be passed by the end of September.

Under the new arrangements, more than two million people who were eligible to vote in the 1995 Legislative Council polls' functional con-

stituencies would be disenfranchised. They would be replaced by corporate votes numbering no more than 200,000.

The pro-democracy movement in the territory attacked the plan. "The majority of the seats in the Legislative Council will be dominated by the rich and the powerful, and the pro-Communists, so this system is fraudulent, undemocratic and bad. It should be exposed and condemned," Emily Lau, the ousted pro-democracy legislator, said.

Along with the members of the territory's popular Democratic Party, she was thrown out of office on July 1 when Britain returned Hong Kong to Chinese rule. They were replaced by members of the

Provisional Legislature. Lee Wing-tat, another ousted Democratic Party legislator, said: "This... arrangement is designed for those who Mr Tung wants to see elected."

Mr Lee was referring to Hong Kong's Chief Executive, Tung Chee-hwa.

Britain's chief diplomat in Hong Kong, Francis Cornish, welcomed the plan to hold the election as early as May, but voiced misgivings about curbing democracy.

Children arrive: Dozens of children who were born in China, some of whom had been stranded there for years without their families, walked across the border to be with their parents in Hong Kong. About 60,000 are waiting to join their families.

### WORLD SUMMARY

#### Colombia to seize drug cash

Bogota: The Colombian Constitutional Court's endorsement of a law allowing the seizure of assets acquired with drug money has been welcomed as a big step in the fight against drug trafficking (Victoria Burnett writes).

"This marks the beginning of the end of a history of violence, drug trafficking and corruption," said Claudia Blum, a Liberal Party senator and one of the law's original proponents.

The law, passed by Congress last December, was questioned on the ground that it violated the individual's right to private property. The court voted three to six to uphold it late on Wednesday. Because the law is retroactive, the state can now seize assets belonging to major traffickers. The cartels own millions of pounds worth of properties. (Leading article, page 19)

#### Kenya fighting strands tourists

Mombasa: Hundreds of tourists were stranded as more Kenyan security forces were sent in to tackle marauders who have killed at least 21 people around this Indian Ocean port.

Police closed the road from Mombasa to beach resorts and tourists were urged not to leave hotels as police and troops fought gun battles with about 100 armed men. (AFP)

#### Matron kills 18

Cairo: Aida Nur el-Din, 42, a matron, is in a coma after allegedly admitting killing at least 18 patients and then attempting suicide. She reportedly acted so that she would not be disturbed at night. (AP)

#### Judge let off

Lima: Peru's Interior Ministry has reversed its decision to charge Judge Elba Minaya Calle with terrorism for ordering the release of a woman with alleged links to rebel guerrilla groups. (AFP)

#### Olive branch

Tokyo: The North Korean and Japanese Governments announced that they will for the first time in nearly five years hold talks in Beijing next week on eventually establishing diplomatic relations. (AP)

#### Ferries sink

Manila: At least four Hong Kong tourists and 12 Filipinos died and 75 people were believed to be missing after two ferry boats sank in separate incidents in Manila and the central Philippines. (AP)

#### Words of love

Beijing: A Chinese bridegroom, who lost the power of speech 21 years ago when his first wife divorced him, suddenly found his voice again at his wedding banquet with his new bride. (Reuters)

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# The King's Memphis gets all shook up

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN MEMPHIS

MEMPHIS has been an exceptionally bizarre place during this "20th Elvis Anniversary Week" and can be best described as a cross between Lourdes and Disneyland, or Fatima and Butlin's. Thousands of people from all over the world, all dressed and coiffed identically, have been shuffling around the city in a happy stupor, medieval pilgrims in the Age of the Internet.

There are Elvises here from everywhere. This correspondent has met a "Viking Elvis" from Bergen in Norway; a group of "Elvis Bravehearts" from Glasgow; Australian Elvises, each with stuffed kooka toys wearing sequined jumpsuits and hundreds and hundreds of Japanese Elvises. "Japan is the true home of the King," said Yuichi Takehana, from Sapporo.

The piece de resistance, however, and the man who

has attracted the most admiring glances, is a certain "Elvis Singh", a Sikh complete with headgear and long sideburns. To the delight of all, he croons: "I don't do drugs, I don't drink bourbon, all I wanna do is to shake my turban."

The animal kingdom stole the limelight from Elvis for a few hours yesterday after a nurse gave mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to a dying chimpanzee in the emergency ward of a Methodist hospital.

Unlike Elvis, the anniversary of whose death will be marked by an outbreak of emotion today, the chimpanzee still lives. The simian is called Priscilla, the name of the King's wife, and the loonier elements here have lost no time in describing the episode as "a sign from Elvis".

Yesterday a spokesman for the First Presbyterian Church of Elvis the Divine said: "Priscilla the chimpan-

zee is Elvis's way of telling us that he's in Memphis today, sharing with us its air, heavy with the scent of the holy Mississippi River."

There are no black Elvises, however — not a single one. That this should be so in a city with a black majority is intriguing. But black faces have been conspicuous in their absence this week from Beale Street, downtown Memphis's central drag. There are black cooks in the restaurants — rustling up Elvis Gumbo, Presley chitlins, Heartbreak Hotel ribs, Blue Suede chicken wings (spicy as mamma's) — and even some black waitresses and bands. But no black revellers, black men with quiffs, or black men in jumpsuits.

Elvis is regarded by most of Memphis's black people as a "white guy who stole our music". They do not resent him, of course, for he freely admitted his musical debts to

gospel and the blues. They are, quite simply, indifferent to him. "He's not ours," one old man said, shrugging his shoulders.

Some visitors this week have not only supped on Memphis's famed barbecue cuisine, they have also tasted the city's darker flavours. "Elvis tourists", identifiable from a mile away, have been carjacked at gunpoint. They have been mugged, robbed and assaulted, and the police are working overtime.

The most serious incident for the devotees, however, has not been criminal, but artistic. Hundreds of angry Elvises are picketing the gates of the Memphis College of Art, where the winner of a competition for a picture with an Elvis theme was a drawing called *Elvis eaten by ants*. One man said: "She's not a winner, she's a sinner. Didn't Elvis say, 'Don't be cruel'?"

Leading article, page 19



The Graceliners, an all-female group, perform an impromptu Presley song outside Graceland, Elvis's home

## THE SUNDAY TIMES

The Sunday Times Magazine



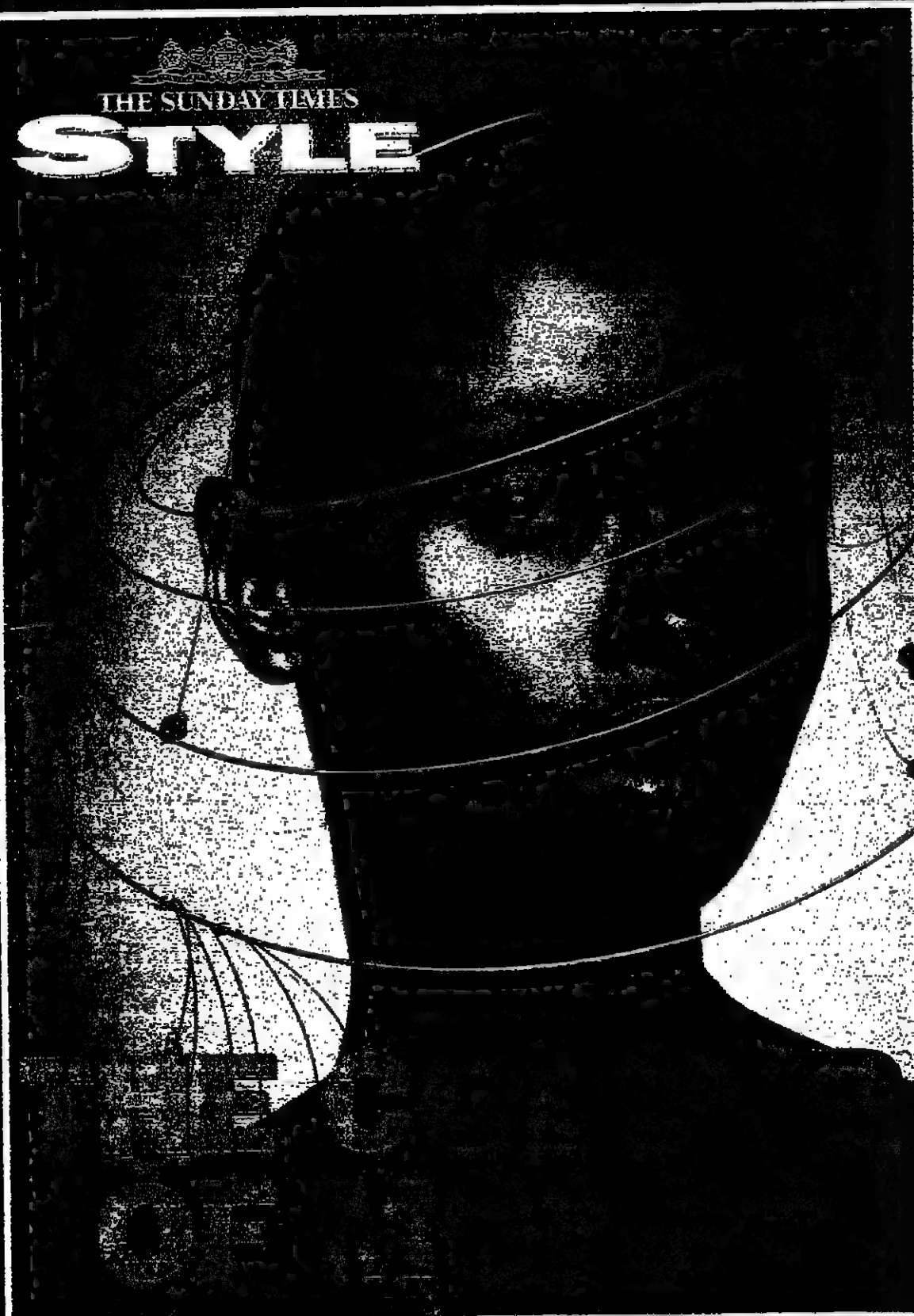
Why Christopher Reeve is smiling — and Britain should be angry



FREE 24-page guide to the top primary schools in Britain



Stephen Fry writes about Christ, rent boys and the importance of being Oscar Wilde



How the beauty world is jumping on the black bandwagon

### ALSO TOMORROW

- A A Gill on the week's most immoral television shows
- To be funny, get personal, David Baddiel tells Lesley White
- Ferdinand Mount argues the case for shaming paedophiles

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

## Ethics storm builds over the Clintons' free holiday

FROM IAN BRIDDER IN WASHINGTON

A ROW was brewing yesterday over President Clinton's rent-free holiday at the home of a wealthy property developer who is seeking government approval for a controversial hotel project. White House officials defended the President, saying his holiday plans were perfectly innocent and no conflict of interest was involved. Others disagreed.

Mr Clinton will arrive tomorrow with Hillary and Chelsea for a three-week stay, the longest holiday of his presidency, at the secluded 19th-century farmhouse owned by Richard Friedman on Martha's Vineyard. Local estate agents say the rental would be between \$10,000 and \$15,000 (£6,250 and £9,375).

Mr Friedman's company has been hired by a civic group to build a hotel on City Hall Plaza in Boston. The group has been negotiating with the General Services Administration (GSA), the Federal Government's landlord, over the shape and placing of the hotel. The GSA objects to the planned site because it would cast a shadow over the adjoining John F. Kennedy Federal Building and pose a security risk to law-enforcement agencies housed there.

The GSA administrator for Boston, Robert Dunley, said Mr Friedman "told me in so many words there'd be certain political pressure coming down on me if the GSA doesn't change its position". He said Mr Friedman did not mention names but had told him before about his ties to Mr Clinton.

Mr Friedman has known the President since the 1980s and was one of the Democratic Party's big contributors invited to stay the night in the Lincoln Bedroom at the White House. He said it was an

honour to have the First Family staying at his holiday home and the last thing he would ever think of doing would be to impose upon his friendship with Mr Clinton by discussing personal business affairs. Mike McCurry, White House spokesman, said just because someone has an issue pending with the Government does not exclude them from extending hospitality to the President. In Washington, the non-partisan Centre for Responsive Politics said there was a huge potential for a conflict of interest. A spokeswoman said the Clintons made a practice of spending holidays in the homes of wealthy individuals. "Their hosts are not disinterested parties," she said.

Meanwhile, Mr Clinton said that Mrs Clinton would take a "leading role" in overseeing a new millennium project launched yesterday. "The White House millennium project will guide and direct America's celebration of the millennium by showcasing the achievements that define us as a nation — our culture, our scholarship, our scientific exploration," he said.



The Clintons launching the millennium project

## DeLorean stripped of his luxury estate

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

JOHN DeLOREAN, the sports car maker still wanted in Britain after the collapse of his factory in Belfast, is to be stripped of his luxury estate in America and his collection of art and antiques. The action is being taken under a court ruling obtained by Mayer Morganroth, his long-time attorney and friend.

Mr Morganroth turned on his client over \$7.2 million (£4.5 million) in unpaid legal fees. The Michigan-based lawyer represented Mr DeLorean in some 40 cases, including the car company's bankruptcy, from 1982 to 1993. He was also involved in Mr DeLorean's acquittal on cocaine trafficking charges and his acrimonious divorce from the model Christine Ferrare.

Mr DeLorean, now 72, insisted that Mr Morganroth had overcharged him, and said the \$800,000 he had already paid in legal fees was sufficient.

But Judge Gilbert Merritt of the US district court in Cincinnati ruled on appeal on Thursday that Mr DeLorean must sell his personal assets to pay his legal bill.

The former high-flying executive, who made his name as the youngest chief of Chevrolet, lives on a sprawling farm in the horse country around Bedminster, New Jersey. His neighbours include Nicholas Brady, the former US Treasury Secretary, and Steven Forbes, the publisher and presidential hopeful.

Mr DeLorean, who told the court he had sold a \$50,000 Mercedes to pay his \$30,000 monthly mortgage, recently relinquished most of the 434-acre estate to Merrill Lynch Credit Corporation because of his unpaid debts.

Under that agreement, the remaining 45 acres and the Georgian mansion were to go to his son, Zachary, and his daughter, Kathryn.

Olympic for may

holiday home

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0800 14



## Green 'minority' sees red over plans to reconstruct city for Millennium and Games

## Olympic test for mayor

AS THE fight between Athens and Rome for the 2004 Olympic Games enters the final straight, Francesco Rutelli, the elegant and photogenic Mayor of Rome, robustly dismisses those within his own Green Party who think a win for Rome would be a disaster. "I am not neurotic about criticism. But these people are in a minority. The Greens as a party have voted in favour of our plan for the Olympics — unanimously at the Rome level, and by a big majority at the national level."

Signor Rutelli's visionary plans for reconstructing Rome involve not only the Olympic Games but also — and more immediately — the Millennium, when Rome and St Peter's will be a natural world focus. But an alliance of environmentalists has mounted a "no" campaign, arguing that an ancient city like Rome

ROME FILE  
by RICHARD OWEN

cannot cope with the expected influx and that "white elephant" projects have been created to line the pockets of Italian construction bosses. Signor Rutelli strongly denies he has been seduced away from his Green principles by power. Still only 41, he was elected in 1993, when Italy's mayors were directly elected for the first time. He faces re-election in November. He appears confident, perhaps not only because of his record but also because his film star looks guarantee him a loyal following, especially among women. The

location of his office also inspires a sense of destiny: it overlooks Michelangelo's Campidoglio square on one side and the Roman Forum on the other.

"My critics are right when they say I opposed bringing the Games to Italy in 1992," he says. "But that was during the 'Clean Hands' anti-corruption drive in Milan, when officials and businessmen were being jailed every day. It is very different now. If you are investing large amounts of public money, you have to be sure everything is above board."

Signor Rutelli maintains that only 15 per cent of the \$10 billion (\$6.3 billion) Rome Olympic budget is going into new construction. "We already have most of the sports facilities. The money is being invested in transport, parks, infrastructure, renovation. It is not all concrete and cement. Big business will benefit in only a minimal way." Some works are inevitably disruptive. Rome's cobbled streets are being ripped up for the installation of 1,800 miles of fibre optic cable, and a new underground line is being built to link the Colosseum and the Vatican.



Signor Rutelli, whose modern vision for the historic capital has come under fire from environmentalists

The Olympic Village at Tor Vergata, campus of one of Rome's three universities, will benefit students, he says. "We have about 230,000 students, of whom 60,000 are from out of town, and we don't have places for them to sleep." Sensitive to the charge that he

had neglected Rome's drabber suburbs, he has staged a high-tech exhibition showing that almost 100 new parks have been carved out of derelict land, with disused factories turned into award-winning arts and community centres. "Modernisation is

not automatically a bad thing." But what about the charge that a planned traffic underpass beneath the Tiber embankment at the historic Castel Sant'Angelo is doomed because the diggers keep finding archaeological treasures?

Signor Rutelli drew me an instant sketch map. "They have found parts of the old bastions in a perfect state of conservation. But it's not a tragedy, we have the tunnelling technology to go deeper, beneath the river level. You see, very Green."

## Exiled Prince's fate lies with MPs

IF ALL goes well, the exiled heir to the throne of Italy, Prince Victor Emmanuel, will be able to return to his homeland with his family next year. The Cabinet has approved a Bill allowing the House of Savoy to return for the first time since the 1946 referendum which ended the monarchy, provided the former Royal Family does not engage in politics.

The Bill still has to be passed by parliament, however, and Victor Emmanuel cannot seem to stop himself making remarks which inflame anti-monarchist feeling and endanger his chances of repatriation. The left as a child with his father, King Umberto II. Earlier this year the Prince observed that Mussolini's race laws had been "not so terrible". This week he angered Rome by publicly boasting that he had "entered Italian waters by 657 yards" when he made the short journey by yacht from his holiday villa in Corsica (which is French) to a point near the neighbouring island of Sardinia (which is Italian) to meet the mayor of the little Sardinian port of Santa Teresa di Gallura.

"What kind of King would Victor Emmanuel make?" asked *La Repubblica* in mock despair. *Corriere della Sera* pointed out that the exiled Prince had chosen the wrong place to gloat, since in the 1946 referendum 70 per cent of the citizens of Santa Teresa voted for the republic, even though most of Sardinia was royalist.

## Lure of holiday homes

THIS weekend is Ferragosto, the traditional mid-August holiday when most of Italy simply shuts down. But as the heatwave takes hold, many Italians who would normally head for the beaches or the hills are staying at home. Although foreign tourists continue to pour into Tuscany and "art cities" such as Florence, hoteliers elsewhere rely on home-grown custom. Bookings at the seaside and in the mountain resorts are said to be down by 10 to 20 per

cent, as Italians feel the pinch of the centre-left Government's austerity drive, designed to help Italy to meet the Maastricht criteria for the single currency. Families may also be being put off by the lack of space on the beaches: according to La Stampa, a holiday on the Mediterranean Riviera offers 28cm per sunbather and San Remo 27cm. But for a roomy 600cm you have to go down the rugged coastline of the South, to Otranto.

## German in BSE food plot jailed

KONSTANZ A German who tried to extort millions of marks from the Swiss Nestlé Maggi company by threatening to inject its food products with "mad cow" disease — Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy — was jailed for three years and two months yesterday.

Identified only as Rainer M, he said debts led him to crime this year. A court in this southern town gave his wife, Gabriele M, a one-year suspended sentence for her part in the plot.

German police are also investigating an extortion attempt on Thomy, another Nestlé company. It got a letter saying its products had been contaminated. (Reuters)

## Italians queue up for politician's cash gift

ROME Thousands of Italians queued for hours yesterday to receive free handouts of 50,000 lire (£17) from a maverick politician who is protesting at the use of taxpayers' money to finance political parties.

About 3,000 people waited all morning in sweltering heat in front of Rome's Campidoglio, or city hall, to receive a wad of cash from Marco Pannella's Radical Party, which handed out an estimated 150 million lire.

The cash was distributed in 10,000 lire notes stamped with the words: "This is part of the loot stolen from each citizen. The Radical Party has decided not to use this stolen money and to give it back. Put it to good use."

Under a law reintroduced this year after a two-year

hiatus, the Government has given 160 billion lire of tax revenues to political parties, distributed according to their size. Signor Pannella's party received 2.7 billion lire.

The law had been repealed by a referendum in 1993, largely because of public outrage over the Tangentopoli "Bribeville" scandals that exposed hundreds of politicians and businessmen involved in illegal party financing.

The Radical Party, which supports the independent financing of parties, wants to scrap the law again. "This is a day to remember, with Italians celebrating honest people and not those who steal," Signor Pannella said.

Last month he gave away £70,000 in northern Italy. (Reuters)

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Marketing is the new rock'n'roll. Is that an original thought? If so, I have had two this year, and it's only August. But I digress. Marketing is the new rock'n'roll. It used to be comedy, but trendy comic folk are apparently so dumbstruck by the metaphysical infallibility of new Labour policy that they have renounced satire, at least for the duration of St Tony's Government.

Then poetry — poetry! — was hilariously acclaimed as the new rock'n'roll. After that it was food. I daresay that fortune-telling will now get the accolade, following Diana's impulsive dash to Mystic Meg of Derbyshire. And I am fairly sure that avant-garde sculpture, the sort involving pickled sheep or bodily functions for preferably both at the same time, has also been hailed in recent months as the new rock'n'roll, if only by the dealers of the artists concerned. But that only proves what I said to begin with: Marketing is the new rock'n'roll.

## A big hand for Mr Svengali, please

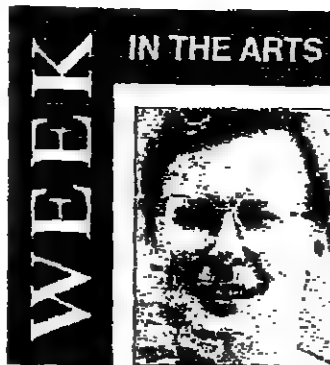
Precisely what is being marketed has ceased to matter. What fascinates people, what gives them a buzz and sends them home happy, is the knowledge that they have been hoodwinked by a really classy marketing trick. Marketing is now the preferred field of operation for the Napoleons of our era. So it isn't surprising that the brilliance of the marketing nearly always outshines the brilliance of the product being marketed.

These thoughts first struck me (for some inexplicable reason) during the general election campaign. They struck me again this week as I contemplated the faintly alarming spectacle of whole teams of reporters on excellent newspapers chasing the latest sighting of a new record by the pop group Oasis. "Good heavens," exclaimed a friend who is even less attuned to the Zeitgeist of 1997 Britain than I

am, if that is possible. "You've all fallen for a marketing stunt. You don't even know if the album is any good. Aren't you ashamed?"

Silly boy! The story is the marketing. Whether the album is any good is beside the point. We are acclaiming genius here, but the genius has nothing to do with music. It's the kind of genius that can reuse hundreds of newspapers, radio stations and TV companies with a dripfeed of tantalising snippets, until the (still unheard) album has acquired the sort of legendary aura usually reserved for sweeping madonnas.

Some people worry that teenagers are being manipulated by such marketing sophistries. They shouldn't. Teenagers are quite capable of recognising hype for what it is — but they also relish it, when it is done well, just as everyone relishes a brilliant TV



RICHARD MORRISON

commercial. The problem is not that teenagers don't realise that they are being manipulated. On the contrary, the real danger is that they suspect that they are being manipulated all the time.

These days, youthful naivety disappears well before puberty.

That is surely why there has been such an increase in the number of youngsters doing "media studies". Most students are not naive. They know that a qualification in "media" isn't the first rung on a ladder leading inexorably to Paxman's chair on *Newsnight*. No, they choose to study "media" because they genuinely believe that if you grasp the workings of the press, radio and television — and the wily crafts of manipulation and marketing exercised through these channels — you hold the key to modern life.

Well, nobody doubts that the arts need good marketing. But these days the tail too often wags the dog. Marketing departments

literally call the tune. We all know about Hollywood movies having their denouements altered (long after they are ostensibly "in the can") at the dictate of the studio's marketing department and the all-powerful "focus groups". But now books, musicals, TV series, sporting events, pop groups and even some newspapers are increasingly fashioned according to commands from omnipotent marketing gurus. We live in a Svengali heaven.

Inevitably, the dangerous edge is rubbed off art created under such conditions. Worse, there is an impatience about art that doesn't easily fit into the soundbite culture preferred by the marketers: serious plays or symphonies, for example. But as we savour the insouciant sweep of a great marketing campaign, a little thing like the actual quality of the

item being hyped is the last thing on our minds. We buy the album as an endorsement of the brilliant marketing, not the product.

And by the time the critics get their say (those who haven't already been wined and dined into euphoria) their reviews are irrelevant. "Sentence first — verdict afterwards!" cried Lewis Carroll's Queen, and in our own topsy-turvy wonderland the dispassionate critical verdict is also the last thing anybody wants to hear.

One day, no doubt, the historians will survey our Faddish Nineties and say: "Great marketing, shame about the art." But I can get too annoyed about the current spate of Oasis fever engineered by Alan McGee's Creation Records. I know that I am witnessing a master at work, and I don't mean Noel Gallagher. Incidentally, I see that new Labour has now recruited McGee to serve on the new "task force" set up to revolutionise our cultural life. Clearly, running the country is going to be the new rock'n'roll.

## Pure Russian magic

THURSDAY'S visit by Valery Gergiev and his Kirov Orchestra was one of the Prom season's hottest tickets, and still it surpassed expectations. London is lucky to have the conductor as a regular visitor, but hearing him with the musicians he has honed over the years is a special experience rare in a world of itinerant maestros and interchangeable orchestras.

Gergiev also brought three remarkable singers with him from the Kirov Opera, to give a thoroughly Russian performance of Shostakovich's orchestral song-cycle *From Jewish Folk Poetry*. Incidentally,

### BBC PROMS

Kirov Orchestra  
Gergiev  
Albert Hall Radio

this important score had not been heard at the Proms before, but then it is something of a rarity everywhere. It was conceived as a protest against Stalin's treatment of the Jews, but could not be premiered until after the dictator's death.

The outward simplicity of the cycle hides a bundle of enigmatic contradictions: after the bleakness of the opening song, no listener could take the Soviet-style optimism of the final numbers seriously. Gergiev caught the essence of the work in a very slow account of the utterly hopeless *Lullaby*, with the gently rocking lines given full meaning by Larissa Diadkova. Her coppery contralto was matched by Marina Shaguch's perfectly-centred soprano, and Evgeny Alimov was the plaintive tenor soloist.

The rest of the programme displayed the orchestra's tonal colours. It opened with Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* fantasy overture, and as the instrumental layers built up, one marvelled at the individuality of the woodwinds, the fully rounded sound of the trombones, the unique "buzz" of the cellos, but most of all the discipline and precision of the soft playing; these players are the current keepers of St Petersburg's patrician musical tradition.

Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* is much more than a showpiece, and Gergiev conducted it with thrilling sweep. But its stories were evoked in bright colours, and the quality of the orchestra's soloists, not only the flexible first violin but also the distinctive oboe and bassoon, shone through.

JOHN ALLISON



Cheryl Campbell as Arkadina and Duncan Bell as Trigorin in Stephen Unwin's overblown production of Chekhov

## Assaulted by birdsong

### THEATRE

#### The Seagull

Donmar

Chekhov's first attempt to find a new form for the theatre was famously misunderstood at its first production, by actors and audience alike, and only when Stanislavsky directed it two years later did it become a success. But a programme note by Stephen Mulrine, translator of the version being used here by English Touring Theatre, reveals an astonishing detail about the play's early history.

It seems that Stanislavsky, who also played Trigorin, was never entirely at ease with the play, and after Chekhov's death in 1904 *The Seagull* was dropped from the repertoire of the Moscow Art Theatre until 1960. This means that for more than half a century, and continuing long after Stanislavsky's death, this crucial play was ignored by the company which nonetheless used a flying seagull as its image. A daunting example of inertia and schizophrenia staggering down the decades hand in hand.

Stephen Unwin's production, though attractive in several details, nonetheless hits us in the eyeball and the eardrum in a manner that Stanislavsky's first actors, al-

ways prone to overemphasis, might have relished. Cheryl Campbell's Arkadina almost chokes herself into a coma when her brother suggests she provide a little money for her son. Though her family background is modestly grand — Sorin, her brother, is a retired judge — she could give lessons in vulgarity to any fish-wives scattered around the lake, screaming "Kostya, darling!" to her son in a voice that curdles the blood.

The intention must be to present Arkadina as a flamboyant thespian of the old school, prone to giving just the sort of unsavoury performances on the Kharkov stage that Kostya (and Chekhov) detested. But the production as a whole picks up this coarseness, and the outbursts of savage rage that Campbell gives us work against other elements of the play.

Likewise, Christopher Good's Don huris his lines at people as vigorously as he propels Masha's snuff-box

into the shrubbery. There is no need to force the words across in this way. Less is not just more, but, truly, the only good way.

Nina has to be callow and calf-eyed until the last act, but Joanna Roth surprisingly brings aggression to her early scene with Kostya. At the same time, and not simply because of the style of dress, her otherwise rapt ingenueness turns her into Dorothy on the road to Oz.

Mark Bazeley (Kostya), eyes flashing from his pale and haunted face, valiantly coped with a knee injury that has obliged him to walk with a crutch, but Unwin could have ignored the stage direction that requires Arthur Cox's Sorin to lean on a walking-stick. Their first entry together became distractingly comic. Most in keeping with Chekhov's declared wishes is Duncan Bell's Trigorin, quiet, even withdrawn in manner, but whose faint Scottish burr poignantly conveys the beauty of the lake he is obliged to leave. Otherwise, this is not a production to allow the play's power to steal furtively into the heart.

JEREMY KINGSTON

## The ostrich and Co second that emotion

WHEN the Verve disbanded accidentally in late 1995, they had never touched the celestial heights they had always talked of reaching. But early this year, after repairing the rift between singer Richard Ashcroft and guitarist Nick McCabe, the Wigan-born quintet re-formed and rediscovered their hunger to be the best band in Britain.

Encouraged by the friendship and patronage of Oasis, these northern souls resolved once again to try to make rock shows not just transcendent but almost religious experiences.

To judge by advance word of this tour, which sold out instantly, the band are already in godlike form. At Wolverhampton's Civic Hall, they certainly proved themselves ready to reach for the stars once more. Ashcroft, an emaciated human scarecrow with a serial killer stare, danced barefoot on an oriental rug placed centre stage. Gyrating his wiry limbs while bent double like a constipated ostrich, he made an unlikely rock icon. But as soon as his colleagues got into their roar-

### POP

#### The Verve

##### Wolverhampton

ing, anthemic flow, the singer's eccentric and edgy presence made perfect sense.

The set was heavily weighted with new songs from the band's forthcoming third album, *Urban Hymns*, and all the better for being so. Old tunes such as *This Is Music* still retained an undeniable grandeur, but several others simply underlined just how shapeless and self-indulgent much of the band's early output was, especially Ashcroft's blankly declamatory lyrics.

The newer material proved not only more tightly structured but far more engagingly emotive. For the love-lorn lament *On Your Own*, Ashcroft strapped on an acoustic guitar and swapped his pugilistic swagger for something approaching vulnerability. He then crooned the band's new single *Drugs Don't Work*, like a man hum-

bled into submission by his broken heart. Although the performance was slightly clumsy, this stirring ballad already sounds like one of the year's best singles.

This shift towards more focused tunes with stronger emotional hooks has undoubtedly been the key to transforming the band from cult heroes to mainstream contenders. Even so, the Verve are still probably not quite the electrifying spectacle that they think they are, and there were a few flat moments during their Wolverhampton show which no amount of messianic posturing could salvage. Still, a little overblown self-importance has always been crucial to bands as single-minded and individual as this.

And when they rounded off the night with the sampled orchestral flourishes of their magnificent, grandly operatic comeback single, *Bitter Sweet Symphony*, it was hard not to be swept along by the crashing melodrama of it all. Conspicuous ostriches or not, the Verve are heading for greatness.

STEPHEN DALTON

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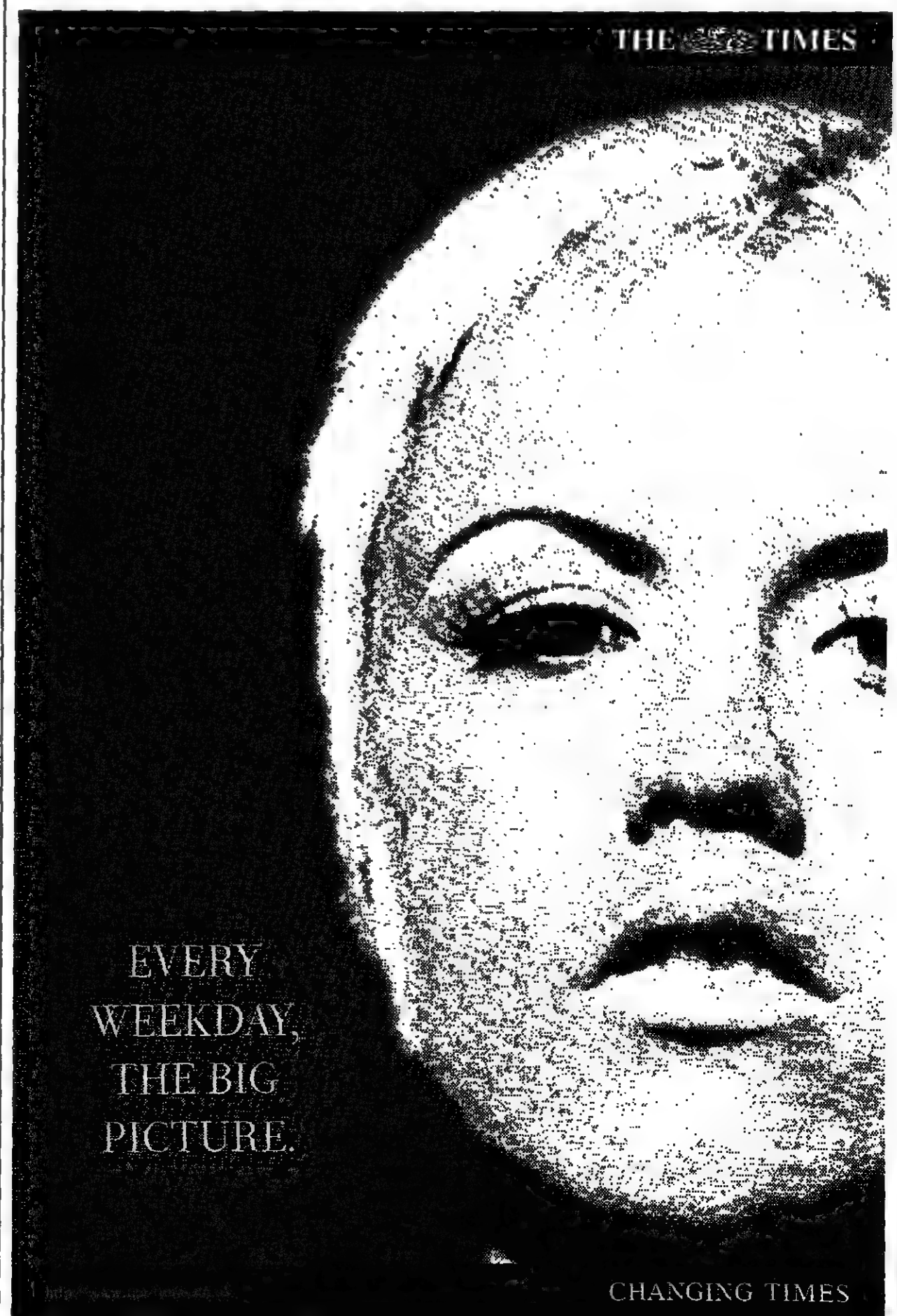


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CHANGING TIMES



## Must the poor pay the price of victory?

Roy Hattersley finds Mandelson a dubious salesman for Labour

These days the most important Labour speeches are always preceded by a judicious leak which whets the appetite of the waiting world. So news that the Prime Minister is to lead a task force which will examine the causes of and cures for "social exclusion" was broadcast long before Peter Mandelson made the speech which described the initiative.

Hoping that social exclusion was a way of describing poverty without antagonising the middle classes, I rejoiced to hear the preview of what the Minister without Portfolio was going to say. How, and by whom, the announcement was made seemed far less important than the announcement itself. Then I read the full text of the Fabian Summer Lecture. Sometimes the medium really is the message.

Working parties are created either to bide time or to make progress. For the next month or two, all questions and complaints about the Government's poverty programme will be met by the assurance that the problems of the poor are being investigated. Nobody can complain about that — even though every moderately competent social worker could produce a list of urgent needs that a compassionate government would meet without delay. The real question — which must be asked about every working party, task force and departmental inquiry — is whether or not it is more than a protection against the accusation of inactivity. In both language and content, Mr Mandelson's lecture was depressingly superficial. Until the new unit promises specific action, there will be fears that the assault on exclusion will be similarly facile.

Mr Mandelson attacks as inadequate the demand for "the redistribution of cash from rich to poor" which others artificially choose as their own limited vision of egalitarianism. No one who has criticised the Government's poverty programme has ever suggested that income redistribution is in itself enough. Of course the causes of poverty have to be addressed. But while the long-term remedies are working through, thousands of families — some of whom can never benefit from the Welfare to Work programme — are living below the poverty line. No minister has provided a convincing explanation of why they are not offered immediate help. Mr Mandelson deals with the question like a door-to-door salesman whose merchandise is obviously second-rate. He talks quickly about something else and attacks his competitors for deficiencies which he has invented.

Naturally enough, the Minister without Portfolio spent Thursday evening telling his public relations triumph. His response to cross-examination undermined confidence in the initiative even more. Asked about the Government's policy on retirement pensions, he insisted that the Government would "stand by the elderly."

Mr Mandelson — who, on the *World at One*, had announced his enthusiasm for philosophy — may care to ask himself what used to be called "the philosopher's question": How does standing by the

pensioners differ from not standing by them? The best answer he could give yesterday was the assertion that the basic pension had been increased in line with inflation.

A second "philosopher's question" immediately arises. How does Labour's policy on the basic pension differ from the Tory alternative that was so bitterly criticised before the election? Once upon a time, the answer was obvious. Pensions, Labour promised, would be increased in line with improvements in average earnings. But new Labour regards that as too generous.

The Minister without Portfolio was asked outright if there was any prospect of improving benefit levels for the disabled, the chronically sick and the growing number of pensioners to whom the assault on the root causes of poverty would offer nothing. Perhaps, he answered, when the economic conditions allowed. It is hard to imagine a more propitious moment to increase taxes by (say) two per cent, use half of the income to improve living standards below the poverty line and — by taking the rest out of commercial circulation — dampen down the overheated economy without industrially damaging increases in interest rates. To talk as if there were an economic case against increasing benefits is so patently absurd that it adds to the belief that poverty is only an item on the public relations agenda.

That fear is certainly deepened by the constant emphasis on "exclusion" — a weak concept that can be defined in any way which is convenient — rather than "poverty", which can be described, measured and identified. Exclusion, Mr Mandelson told us, is "about being cut off from what the rest of us call normal life". Nothing is more likely to create that unhappy condition than continual poverty.

Single parents — whose benefit supplement is to be abolished by the Labour Government — will not feel more included in society at large when their purchasing power is dragged further below the national average. They need real money in their hands and they need it now. That can only be achieved by a conscious policy of income redistribution. The first step towards doing what is right by the underprivileged is an honest description of their problem. They are poor. Fancy explanations will not help them. A moderate redistribution of income certainly would.

Tessa Jowell, the Minister of Public Health, recently gave an admirably honest explanation of why the poor must remain in poverty. Labour's promise not to increase income tax had been necessary to win the election and could not be broken now. The paradox is breathtaking. The disadvantaged and the dispossessed voted Labour because they believed the party would lift them out of poverty. Now, they have to pay the price of victory. Please God, when the Prime Minister gets back from his holidays, he will say something sensible about poverty and his exclusion task force. Then I can rejoice again at its creation.



## Power to the pupils

A-level students rightly prefer 'soft' subjects to dry and useless sciences

Excellent news from the scholastic front. The reactionary armies are in retreat. The youthful forces of choice and common sense are advancing. Pupils across the land are defying the political correctness of their elders and opting for liberty.

August is the month when the British nation goes innominate — not its schoolchildren but its teachers, commentators and politicians. Thursday saw the John Patten memorial contest for state schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. (Scottish competition is considered too tough to risk.) The results are the usual nonsense. "Best" schools are like heavyweight boxers. The best depends on which system you follow. In *The Times*, the Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe won. In *The Daily Telegraph*, Chelmsford County High came top. *The Independent* gave its palm to Malvern's Chase High. Each used different criteria and the tables bore little relation to each other. So much for objective quantification.

More inane is the response to the results themselves. These days nobody over 40 can bring himself to admit that young people might be getting clever. Having made A-levels the rock on which British education would be rebuilt, conservatives now deplore "A-level inflation", with A and B passes rising some 30 per cent in ten years. They assert, on no evidence but hearsay, that this cannot be right. When a statistic gives good news about the young it must be faulty.

This year grades rose overall by another 1.3 per cent. The best reason is the obvious one. Lazy universities are now selecting students almost entirely on A-level grades. Lazy inspectors are measuring schools on the same basis. The result is that both pupils and teachers are devoting more effort to improving grades. Education for 15 to 18-year-olds in most schools now concentrates on league table rankings. All this tells us is that if higher grades are what you want, higher grades you will get. It is the policy equivalent of packing an athlete full of steroids. Performance will rise, if you do not care about the side-effects. We still have no idea which schools are really better, which pupils are brighter or whether the economy is fitter as a result.

Yet we do know something more encouraging. Despite the dictatorship of the league table, pupils enjoy choice of A-level subject. For most of

them, this is the first big decision of their career. Up to 16 there is virtually no curriculum option, given the highly centralised GCSE syllabus. After 16 the reverse applies. The university admissions cartel has all but collapsed, and with it the demand for a homogeneous portfolio of A-level subjects. Sixth-formers have reacted by spreading their wings. They have turned their backs on dull subjects pressed on them by parents and teachers, and opted for ones they see as useful in their careers.

The chief casualties have been maths and science A levels, which have seen ten years of relative decline. This week's report in *The Times* was bald: "Pupils desert traditional subjects." Art and design has now overtaken physics in A-level popularity. Business studies and sociology are now attracting as much interest as chemistry. Although maths and physics picked up marginally last year, they still appeal to a falling percentage of pupils. More are talking computing, media studies, psychology and physical education. Science occupies just 17 per cent of the total of papers sat.

This indicates that one of the biggest ever exercises in educational engineering, the "science first" policy of the 1980s, has failed. The Thatcher and Major Governments tried to force ever more pupils into science up to the age of 16. There were science weeks, science prizes, science salary increments.

I hope someone audits this fiasco. The Tory Government could never bring itself to abandon social planning. Ministers incanted, year after year, that Britain "needed" more scientists. There was no evidence for this statement. If pay is the measure of professional demand, scientists other than doctors are now in severe over-supply compared to almost all other professions. Yet such is the political correctness in education that, if I wrote that schools would best serve their pupils by turning out more lawyers, accountants, market-

ing executives and cooks, I would be excoriated. (I write it nonetheless.) To compound the error, this Government now intends to charge the same fee for a science course as for an arts one, expecting popular arts degrees to cross-subsidise unpopular science ones. This is the manpower planning of the madhouse.

At least the pupils are staying sane. They know what stimulates and motivates them to learn, and what will help them to find a job. I wonder how many readers of this article could name a young person now entering a career in which a maths or science degree is prerequisite. The answer is very few. Pupils' know this. They are preferring A-level courses that are likely to help them get a job, while still stimulating their interest in the world about them and challenging

their imagination. Within the sciences, biology is understandably most popular. Nor are the favoured courses necessarily utilitarian. Art, design and English are booming.

At this point in the argument, the reactionaries wheel out their two favourite hobbyhorses. First, they protest that irrelevant subjects are important since they "train the mind". This hokum reminds me of Arnold of Rugby's stipulation that French should never be spoken by his pupils. It could be taught only "grammatically as a dead language". His job was to impart "not knowledge but the means of gaining knowledge". Lytton Strachey wrote that Arnold could not face the possibility that he had wasted his career on Latin and Greek. Yet his sophistry condemned a century of pupils to years wasted acquiring mountains of soon forgotten knowledge. There is no reason why a mind cannot be trained usefully.

The second hobbyhorse holds that so-called relevant subjects, whether at sixth form or university, are a "soft option". In other words, today's young are skiving. Yet law, economics and politics are hard subjects. So too are business, sociology and

design. They are only soft if taught soft, which is the fault not of the content but of its education. English is not generally regarded as soft, yet it is the most popular A-level of all. I detect here another of Arnold's precepts, that the academic version of a good whipping is the only way of ensuring "simplicity, sobriety and humbleness of mind".

Common sense about the curriculum is largely confined to pupils. The fanaticism of the maths and science lobby is similar to that of Arnold's classicists. Parents and teachers, many of them liberal in other respects, hold that "what was good enough for me is good enough for him". Most hypocritical is the educational Right. It believes in choice of schools, yet not of curriculums. It preaches personal choice, yet cries with the pack that "Britain needs more scientists". For a decade under the Tories, the Education Department poured out tens of thousands of unemployed scientists. The only reason appears to be that science was somehow seen as clean, objective, unfuzzy, conservative — though at its most exciting it is anything but.

By now the reader is screaming that I cannot treat science this way. Science has become like ethnic minorities and the disabled, in need of positive discrimination. It has had that discrimination for at least a decade. Students are deserting science courses. They see which employers queue up for the brightest graduates at careers fairs. The overselling of science has spread teaching too thin, demotivated teachers and deterred pupils. Anyone can look at this week's *Ucas* listings and see science and engineering places going begging at all but the most exclusive universities. You need only C grades to do engineering at Edinburgh, and E grades will do at Exeter or Salford.

If I was a scientist I would plead with the Government to reverse its policy and cut science numbers drastically. I would not want to be the lame duck of education. My spokesmen special-pleading at every turn. I would want to be holding my own in the market. British education post-16 has come of age. It is starting to know what the world wants of it. Next time the Government ponders a reform, it should listen to the customers. Those customers are not parents. They are pupils. Each August they show us their wisdom.

Philip Howard



Grammar can be glamorous, but writing by rote is rotten

Grammar is too modest a subject for politicians. Compulsory tests of sloppy English for teenagers have been halted, while curriculum advisers carry out a fundamental review of English testing. So here is an essay to help them. For Neanderthal crusties, grammar is simple rules to be beaten in by rote and rod: the Gods of the Copybook Headings.

1. "Grammar" is derived (irregularly and semi-learnedly) from the Greek words for "the art of alphabetical characters". So how did Sir Walter Scott derive "glamour" from the same source? Grammar is glamorous — discuss.

2. Number in grammar means not getting your singulars and plurals in a twist. Will all those pedants who wrote in to gloat about the headline "Trivia of parish life blocks the message" in last Saturday's *Times* please "correct" the number of the following: there is no news; your stamulus is strained; the agenda is too long; albums and conundrums; octopi and ignorami. Rewrite Paul: "The Wages of Sin Is Death."

3. "Few" is for countables, like such as cabbages and kings. "Less" is for uncountables, such as (like) sugar and spice. So rewrite in "correct" grammar the following sentences: "My house is less than five miles from the station. So it takes less than 15 minutes in a taxi, and costs less than £5." How many miles to Sodor? Less than a thousand. How many innocent men in Sodor? Fewer than ten.

4. The hippy cried out "Like, Help!" while drowning. That was the impredication of Beat Talk. Another cast-iron grammatical rule is that "like" must be avoided in conjunctional use, as in "she behaved like she was drunk". Now correct the slogan "X smokes good like a cigarette should." And while you are at it, correct Shakespeare: "Like an arrow shot from a well experienced Archer hits the mark his eye, doth level at". Jerome K. Jerome ("Dad Robinson, Crusoe wear trousers! I forget. Or did he go about like he does in the pantomime?"). Southery, Newman, Darwin, Morris and other "writers of standing". Which is worse, to be wrong with Shakespeare or right with Professor Fowler?

5. A good judge should be disinterested, but never uninterested in his case. Now so bold as to rewrite John Donne's "Case, wherein the party is disinterested", and Junior ("A careless disinterested spirit is no part of his character"). The grammar of good writers of the past is not necessarily a guide to contemporary writing. But it shows that grammar is a rolling river, not commandments on tablets of stone. The grammar of ferocious pedants is always a generation out of date.

6. Thou shalt never split an infinitive. The Romans didn't, so why should you? But the Latin infinitive was one word *amare*, whereas English has two words "to love". And Romans did on occasion split an infinitive for effect, in the rhetorical device called tmesis. The classic example is Ennius, who split not an infinitive but a brain. *Saxo cereo continuius ornavit*. "With a rock his cere-brain he adorned-bellum." Some split infinitives because be some avoid without replacing the sentence. "He was ashamed to so much as mention it to his wife." "The men are declared to strongly favour a strike." The only reason for obeying the fetish of not splitting an infinitive is that it will spare you impertinent abuse from ignorant pedants.

7. Amend into correct grammar: "That's him. Our Mutual Friend, I wish I could play like you do; has he got a temperance? You are meticulous. Speculation is still rife as to whom will head the England squad." "Whom" is fading away, as the inflections of nouns in Old English have gone. Nobody says "whom" except in funeral addresses or when trying to be hypercorrect. "Between you and I." "Whom" has sat too long here for any good who have been doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with whom.

8. Writing and speaking precisely, in order to convey one's exact meaning with the right words, are finest arts: Grammar is glamorous. But grammar was made for and by man, not man for grammar. It is best taught to infants from the earliest age. That is what turns them into facts. And we carry on learning and changing grammar for the rest of our lives. To "learn" it by rules is as stupid as studying design without the objects of design, or as learning to drive by taking the engine to bits.

## Into battle

THE foot soldiers at the Ministry of Defence are digging in for what could be a lengthy war of attrition with top brass. The cause of the stand-off is the MoD's own in-house monthly lottery. There is suspicion of political manoeuvres to limit the size of payouts.

The lottery has been a rip-roaring success with up to 30,000 members of staff buying tickets each month. The result is that the jackpot now stands at £10,000 and

still the recreational association that runs it has more cash than it knows what to do with. A plan to increase the jackpot to £20,000 seemed to have the approval of the department's top mandarins.

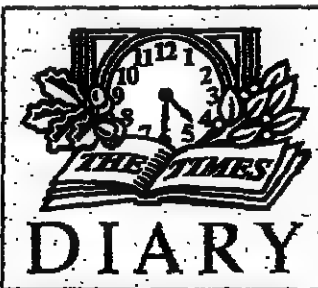
Then it didn't. Word came down that an increase would not be appropriate and the talk in the canteen is that George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, had expressed disapproval that lowly members of staff would gamble away their meagre incomes.

"There is no plan to increase the first prize," says a spokeswoman. "If there was it would be nothing to do with the Secretary of State."

One wonders what Robertson, a decent if dour Scot, would make of the parties thrown by previous jackpot winners. "One went on until security staff threw them out at 2am," says a senior suit.

### Red letter day

BORIS YELTSIN will be glowing with pride this weekend. His 17-year-old grandson, Boris Jr, has got an A grade at A level while still in the lower sixth at Millfield School, Somerset. Critics might



suggest that it would have been embarrassing if he hadn't. The subject was Russian. Boris Okulov, who arrived at the public school last year sporting an upper lip of fine glasnost bum-fluff, will have plenty of chums to celebrate with. Eight Russians sat the exam and all got As.

● A question mark appears above the relationship between pop's biggest hype merchants, Oasis, and Alan McGee, the head of Creation Records who discovered them. McGee, says he wants to buy a Scottish football club. Stranger still, he says he prefers footballers to rock stars. "I like them more because there's a humility about them. Most musicians think they're Dylan. But most of them are like Dylan at the Magic Roundabout," he tells *Four* magazine.

### Hot stuff

SPARE A thought for Mahatma's grandson Gopal Krishna Gandhi as Independence Day celebrations get into full swing. The Indian High Commissioner to South Africa, where his grandfather spent much time, yesterday dined between talk shows in Johannesburg before racing to a flag-raising ceremony in Pretoria, then on to a hot plane to a reception in Durban with the city's large Indian community. Next to Cape Town for another knees-up with South African VIPs. "Just the three receptions with food, music and dancing," an embassy official said. Finally, back to Pretoria to greet a dance troupe from India. Like his grandpa, he is not one to do things by halves.

● A correction from the Press Association regarding a story about Philip Croker, the swot who got seven A grades at A level: "...please read in final par 'his place at Magdalen College, University of Oxford...' substituting 'Magdalen' for 'Maudlin'.

### Grave error

HOT FOOT from the Plain English Campaign comes news that

John Humphrys, Radio 4's rum-bustious broadcaster, has won a "Foot in Mouth" award for his performance during an interview with the Australian High Commissioner on the Today programme yesterday.

Humphrys asked Neal Blewett about the removal of the head of Yagan, the Aboriginal warrior, buried in a Liverpool grave, which is to be returned to Australia.

Blewett said that some small infants were buried above the head's grave and, after advice from archaeologists, it was decided to enter the grave "from the side, through paupers' graves". Humphrys stopped: "Wait a minute, I'm puzzled — the idea of burying porpoises?" A pause, and Blewett said: "Paupers."

### Model flat

WHILE Michael Caine is returning to these shores, his daughter, Natasha, is shipping out to pursue her modelling career in the US and selling her one-bedroom flat in The Village, Battersea, for a reputed £500,000.

Esate agents Douglas and Gordon claim they have already had inquiries, but prospective buyers should be aware that neighbours include Viscount Linley, Bob Geldof and Spice Girl, Mel B.



Natasha: on the move

● Dodi Al Fayed did not perhaps astonish tutors at the exclusive Le Rosey School in Switzerland with his intellectual gifts. Neither did he quite master the art of the schoolboy excuse. A friend recalls that the school secretary once received a phone call on the first day of term from someone with a gruff voice explaining that Dodi would be a few days late back to school because he was a little poorly. "Oh, yes," said the secretary. "And to whom am I speaking?" The gruff voice said: "This is my father."

P.H.S





## BORDERLINE GRADE

Education policy must reconcile excellence and expansion

**G**In the brief interlude between A-level and GCSE results the performance of the examination system needs scrutiny. The Dearing report was one more element in what has been a period of extraordinary upheaval in education. The O level and CSE have been merged, the A level has evolved and polytechnics have transformed themselves into universities. The proportion of all schoolchildren entering higher education has increased from barely 12.5 per cent to nearly three times that. It is, however, far from clear that these changes leave students, or the nation, better served.

The introduction of the GCSE a decade ago has proved the most important innovation. The provision of one single test has encouraged 80 per cent or more of 16-year-olds to stay on at school. For a majority in this age group, the GCSE is a better qualification than the old CSE. However, the O level was more stretching for the brightest students. Quality has been diluted for the sake of a universal formula.

The sharp difference in style between the GCSE and A level makes the former rather poor preparation for the latter. That should logically have led to a decline in the pass rate at 18, but the opposite has happened. The explanations offered are illuminating. The best schools are teaching their pupils in an A-level style from the age of 14. The GCSE is regarded as a distraction which headmasters feel obliged to recognise largely to satisfy parental expectations. The proliferation of new subjects, along with the increased resort to modular exams, has allowed A-level boards to make the adjustment from GCSE much easier. More students may acquire certificates, but at what cost in excellence?

The abolition of the distinction between universities and polytechnics has had a similar impact to the fusion of O-levels and CSEs, but with an important difference. The

decision had many virtues and was probably inevitable. Some polytechnics had an academic record to rival that of traditional universities but suffered from an artificial disparity of status. The emergence of a single sector has challenged old cultures. Many universities have emerged the stronger for the competition — it is the former polytechnics that have lost out. Many of these "new" universities have shed valuable vocational courses in favour of dubious new degrees and yet have still not secured the esteem they wanted.

If experience teaches anything, it should suggest considerable caution when considering proposals to reform the A level. In theory, there is much in the argument that the examination is at present rather narrowly constructed. There is something to be said for broadening education between the ages of 16 and 18 through a supplementary emphasis on literacy, numeracy and information technology. A revamped and rigorous AS level followed in the first year of sixth-form study would have much to recommend it. An "English baccalaureate" that extended rather than amended the A level would be worth exploration. The fear based on past practice is that such a shift would disguise another slip in standards.

The Government can allay concerns if it deals with the current defects in the examination system. The academic quality of A levels would be reinforced by much stricter regulation of the modular method. The introduction of applied A levels, as recommended by Sir Ron Dearing, would do much to restore the vocational element. In the medium term it might well be asked whether the GCSE still has a role in an era when the effective school-leaving age has ceased to be 16. The principles of excellence and expansion are not inherently incompatible. They must be reconciled if our students are to receive the best possible education.

## CRACKING THE DRUG TRADE

Colombia needs help in curbing the deadly flow

The decision by Colombia's Supreme Court to reject the challenge to the law mandating the seizure of assets acquired with drug money is a brave step. In fighting the scourge that has all but overwhelmed it, the Colombian Government and the courts have been held at gunpoint, often all too literally, by the formidable power of drug barons and those they have bought, suborned and intimidated. The present law, passed in December after strong pressure from Washington, is one of the most effective ways of depriving traffickers of their gains, and has already led to the confiscation of banks, businesses, ranches, farms and huge tracts of land. The drug interests, seeing the loss of millions of dollars-worth of laundered profits, challenged the law on the ground that it violated the right to private property. To its credit, the court has refused to give in.

President Samper's term in office has been dogged by the accusation that drug interests funded his campaign. Having won his battle against impeachment, however, he has now pursued the campaign against the narcotics trade with vigour. He has little alternative. Drugs have all but destroyed one of the oldest democracies in Latin America. In the past decade more than 20,000 people, including judges, journalists and policemen, have been killed in the drugs war. Colombia has one of the highest murder rates in the world. Last year the fight against narcotics cost the State \$2.1 billion — almost as much as the money brought into Colombia by the drugs trade.

There have been some successes. Pablo Escobar, head of the Medellín cartel, has been killed and his gang largely disbanded. The leaders of the Cali cartel are mostly in jail. The Government has eradicated 73,000 acres of coca and poppy, confiscated 615,000

kilos of coca leaf and 57,000 kilos of pure cocaine and destroyed processing laboratories, clandestine airstrips and precursor chemicals. All this, however, is nothing compared with the scale of the drug trade. Interdiction, the Government reckons, has at best a 10 per cent success rate. Farmers and villagers who can never earn as much from legal plantings are continuing to grow drug crops in the highlands and deep jungle, paid in advance by traffickers.

The drugs trade is exacerbating two other evils: rampant kidnapping and the virtual civil war between the two powerful and violent guerrilla movements and the 80,000-strong paramilitary forces. The 40-year-old war against the guerrillas is almost the last left in Latin America. But the former Marxists, who once posed as champions of the poor and received their funds from communist countries, now appear to have no ideology apart from self-enrichment from the proceeds of robbery, kidnapping and the drugs trade. The Government is struggling to curb the appalling human rights abuses by its own military forces, but it has found no way of starting negotiations with the guerrillas, who have not issued any political demand for some five years.

Senior Samper insists that his country cannot halt the trade in the face of overwhelming demand and money for drugs in America. Denied certification by Washington that he is doing enough to halt production, he has turned in despair to the United Nations, and wants a conference of drug producing and user countries. This is now on next year's agenda. It may not yield much. But it ought at least to convince America and Europe that curbing demand is the essential first step in halting the flow of drugs from Latin America's killing fields.

## CAN'T HELP FALLING IN LOVE

Elvis lives in the hearts of the young, of whatever age

Wise men say only fools rush in, but after 20 years the time is ripe for a measured assessment of how a snake-hipped youth from Tupelo insinuated himself so potently into the world's imagination. Elvis Presley died 20 years ago today, overweight and played-out, a dysfunctional Dionysus who left behind a beautiful widow and a back catalogue that breaks hearts still. His talent assured him a form of immortality, long before stray sightings suggested it was more than the melody which lived on, but although Elvis was unique, his fame was as much a product of circumstance as genius.

A white kid who could sing the blues like a black man was a precious asset in the Fifties but Elvis might have wasted his vocal sweetness on Tupelo's desert air but for the blessings of the baby-boom age. The prosperity of the Eisenhower era brought affordable portable transistors, the rapid growth of commercial radio and television and the emergence of a new generation of "teenagers" with the money and freedom to enjoy themselves as their parents never could. Before the Second World War there was no antechamber to adulthood, but in the Fifties youth found its winkle-picked feet and the teenager was born. His screen heroes were James Dean and Marlon Brando, but film was a medium familiar to his parents. Rock'n'roll, by contrast, was the teenager's secret garden and Elvis its presiding deity.

From the pelvic gyrations which drove Bible-belt parents to press for his suppression, to the quiff like a coiled serpent, he embodied temptation for a generation in hook to its hormones. His voice, capable of the depth necessary for a negro spiritual yet ready to soar and swoop over a dancefloor, was the perfect vehicle for a range of rebellious rock numbers and slower ballads. Elvis, like all immortals, had a protean quality. The cheek-twitching outlaw of the *Hound Dog* era effortlessly transformed himself into the clean-cut Sergeant of *GI Blues*. The adaptation did credit to more than Presley's showbusiness talent. The god-fearing son of the South neither dodged nor derided the draft, in contrast to the smaller men who danced in his shadow. Only this week more revelations of Presley's patriotism have come to light. The White House has released new material detailing Presley's quixotic offer of help to Richard Nixon in the President's fight against the abuse of street drugs.

Tragically, it was addiction that ended the dream but although the Elvis that the impersonators mimic is the bloated and roccoco figure of his long decline, the image that survives is the young man who embodied youth for the first generation that created a youth culture. Elvis lives as the icon of youth's passion, rebellion and energy — which is why successive generations can't help falling in love with him.

## Hot under collar about forecasts

From Professor Maurice Crosland

Sir, Many parts of Britain have recently undergone a period of high temperatures combined with high humidity. The former have always been faithfully reported but the latter is almost always bathed in mystery: radio, television and the press may warn us that it is going to be "very humid" or even "sticky", but precisely how humid is never revealed, even though that may be more directly relevant to the discomfort of the public than the temperature.

Temperature alone is publicised and a temperature of 90F is spoken of with awe, as if it made the ordinary conduct of life impossible; yet in the dry heat of North Africa normal life continues at temperatures in excess of 90F.

Our American cousins, who suffer greater extremes of climate than ourselves, are sensible enough to publicise equally temperature and humidity, knowing that one datum without the other is no more than a half-truth. In the early history of medicine all this was reported about a patient's pulse might be that it was "rapid", and it was not until after 1850 that doctors would record the actual temperature of a patient.

As the 20th century draws to a close, may I enter a plea to the media to complement its very basic qualitative vocabulary with a quantitative element and let the British public know the actual degree of humidity.

Yours faithfully,  
MAURICE CROSLAND,  
University of Kent at Canterbury,  
School of History,  
Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NX.  
August 13.

From Mr Andy Marks

Sir, In common with my fellow citizens I have endured the recent high levels of temperature and humidity. As one of the Met Office's commercial customers I have also endured its recent low levels of forecast accuracy.

Curious to establish how accurate the Met Office thought its own forecasts were over the last 12 months, I looked in vain for the figures in the office's annual report and accounts for 1996-97.

Instead, on page 23 I found, under "Key Quality Service Target", a "Customer Satisfaction Index for services on national BBC TV and Radio 4." The result is 0.82. What on earth is a customer satisfaction index and from where does it materialise?

I also hunted through the office's 1995-96 report for notification that the accuracy figures as measured by the S-Spm Radio 4 forecast were to be abandoned. To my surprise, in an appendix on page 46 under "Charter Standard for the Public", I found the statement that "the accuracy target [of 84 per cent] remains unchanged for 1996-97."

Can the actual figure have been so bad that they can't bring themselves to publish it?

Yours respectfully,  
ANDY MARKS (partner),  
Skeysan (aerial photography),  
Oak House, Taddington,  
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.  
August 13.

## Cricketing fatalities

From Mr Mark Hathaway

Sir, Angry exchanges between cricketers (report, August 13) are nothing new. Until at least the 1820s, after which the controversies induced by gambling seem to have declined, newspaper coverage is replete with disputes between players which conclude in violence, crowd disorder and even murder. Such consistent antagonism arose from the large sums wagered and played for and the ambiguous nature of the rules then employed.

On October 31, 1776, the *London Chronicle* reported of a match between Kent and Essex at Tilbury Fort... the Essex men refused playing, on which a battle ensued, and the Kentish men being likely to be worsted, one of them ran into the ground and getting a gun from one of the invalids, fired and killed one of the opposite party.

The final death toll was at least three — two shot and one bayoneted. History once again demonstrates that current events could be much, much worse.

Yours faithfully,  
M. D. HATHAWAY,  
Kellogg College, Oxford.  
August 14.

From Mr Raymond Franks

Sir, Magnus Linklater (article, August 14) supports his view that the "so-called deterioration" of behaviour on the cricket field is nothing new by referring to the occasion when W. G. Grace replaced a ball. It had been knocked off by the bowler but Grace blamed it on the wind.

In fact Grace did not get away with this ploy. The game was being played in Yorkshire, and the story is that, following his replacement of the ball, he turned to the umpire and remarked: "It's very windy today, umpire."

The umpire is said to have replied: "It is that, Doctor Grace. See it doesn't blow the cap off on 'rway back to 'pavilion'."

Yours faithfully,  
RAYMOND FRANKS,  
Hillcrest House, Manor Gardens,  
Thornes, West Yorkshire.  
August 14.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

## Future of Africa is not all gloomy

From Mr William Quantrill

Sir, How depressing to read Matthew Parris's negative picture of modern-day Africa, headed "Africa's real epidemic" (August 8).

His statement that most of the former French West African countries "cannot be discussed as 'countries' at all" is extraordinary. I spent from 1991 to 1995 as British Ambassador to a group of countries — Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea — which included several ex-French territories. I can assure Parris that they were very real countries, in every sense. Certainly they all had their problems — corruption and inefficiency among them — but all of them had functioning civil societies. To question whether they satisfy the basic criteria in international law for the existence of a state is absurd.

Of course, it is equally wrong to be starry-eyed about the prospects for Africa. There is much hardship and deprivation, too much violence, weak leadership and, yes, the blight of corruption. But there is also a consensus emerging about what should be done to tackle the problems.

Most African countries now either have democratic governments (albeit in many cases still functioning imperfectly) or at least acknowledge that they should have them. Economic reforms are coming slowly but are beginning to show results in a few countries and others will undoubtedly follow.

It will not be easy. It will need sustained international support, focused on the needs of Africa and not simply on the role it can play in a wider political struggle — such as the Cold War — that was largely irrelevant to Africa. And does it not occur to Matthew Parris that the vast numbers of refugees in Africa, sad symbol though they are of too many bitter conflicts, are also indicative of a tradition of hospitality, of giving shelter and support to neighbours in time of trouble?

Yours sincerely,  
BILL QUANTRILL,  
Tor House, 36 Newtown,  
Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire.  
wquantrill@msn.com

## Foxhunting's place in country life

From Mr Mark Crichton Maitland

Sir, Clive Aslet ("Beware smoke signals from the rural bonfire", August 9) is right both to lament the Government's handling of countryside issues and to suggest that the foxhunting issue will not go away.

Earlier this month the Forestry Commission, a government department which is also one of the country's largest landowners, announced a review of hunting on its land. In this part of Scotland, where foxhunting and forestry happily coexist, we can see no internal need for such a review.

At the risk of being cynical, one has to suspect that this is a backdoor attempt by politicians to damage or ban field sports without the need for contentious legislation. Such a move would be thoroughly undemocratic, and if true is to be deplored. Public institutions of all kinds should follow the democratic process and not seek to sidestep or pre-empt it.

Perhaps the Forestry Commission review will be followed by a Ministry of Defence review?

Yours faithfully,  
MARK CRICHTON MAITLAND,  
Estate Office,  
Elderslie & Houston Estates,  
Kirk Road, Houston, Renfrewshire.

## Buying British

From Mrs Beryl V. Pardoe

Sir, Mr Richard Whitehead (letter, August 12) asks what is going on when a bottle of Indian lager sells for less than English bottled water. Should he visit Malvern I can show him a water spout half a mile from here where he can collect as much free water as he can carry.

He may have a long wait as many people are surrounded by their four-gallon containers. Last year I saw a small water tank in the process of being filled. Perhaps the water for which Mr Whitehead paid £2.95 came from such an entrepreneur.

Yours faithfully,  
BERYL V. PARDOE,  
Hebron House, Blackheath Way,  
West Malvern, Worcestershire.

## BT's disservice

From Mr John Dover

Sir, You published a letter from me on July 28 regarding my having registered, inter alia, with BT's Telephone Preference Service to stop "junk" telephone calls. I received replies from readers thanking me for the information and telling me that that service had been overwhelmed with requests for registration forms.

At 7pm this evening I was the subject of an unsolicited call from BT trying to sell me additional services.

Yours faithfully,  
J. DOVER,  
9 Greenhill Avenue,  
Giffnock, Glasgow.  
jdover@mba1963.hbs.edu  
August 11.

Weekend Money letters, page 35

## A touchstone for philosophers

From Mr Graham Coy

Sir, Dr Roger Scruton remarks correctly ("The return of the sophist", August 11) that charlatans masquerading as philosophers can cause a great deal of harm. This harm can be done either on a local scale, as by the fee-paid sophist, or a more cosmic scale, as by Hegel (the philosophical lapdog of the Prussian State) or Nietzsche, whose works had such an unfortunate effect on German nationalist fanatics.

But a philosopher must have financial support. Socrates may not have taken fees, but must have had some money.

Perhaps the ideal is to inherit an independent income, as did Descartes (who was thereby emboldened to remark that "there is nothing one can imagine so strange or unbelievable that it has not been said by one or other of the philosophers...").

Let us not forget, however, that financial independence is a necessary, not sufficient, qualification for the pursuit of pure truth (if such exists).

Yours sincerely,  
GRAHAM COY,  
Flat 28, Dormy House,  
Central Drive, Bournemouth, Dorset.  
August 14.

From Mr Ralph Blumenau

Sir, Of course there are some meretricious academics who parade as philosophers, but Roger Scruton is surely unduly narrow when he would bestow the title of genuine philosophers on only those who tell us that the distinctions between true and false, right and wrong, are "objective and binding".

By that canon David Hume, for example, would not make the grade, though a whole lot of dogmatic thinkers who use the utmost integrity in forcing arguments and experience to fit into their preconceptions of right and wrong would qualify.

So far from philosophy standing against the tide of "helpless relativism", it has powerfully contributed towards it, precisely by stimulating that spirit of inquiry which Roger Scruton finds in Plato. Yet Plato's proposals for censorship would have had the effect of stifling that very spirit, and they would find an echo in many other philosophies, from St Augustine's to that of Marxist-Leninism, which hold that the distinctions between right and wrong are "objective and binding".

Yours faithfully,  
RALPH BLUMENAU,  
111 Princes House,  
50 Kensington Park Road, W11.  
August 11.

## Too many peers

From Mr Alan J. Kennard

Sir, The creation of 57 life peers (report, August 2) raises once again the question of the size of the House of Lords, which has grown from 884 in 1958, when the Life Peerages Act was passed, until today, when the number of peers is about 1,200, of whom about 400 are life peers. In 1914 the roll of the House of Lords stood at 641.

In the past 40 years Conservative and Labour prime ministers have named an unprecedented number of life peers, but many of these peers play little or no part in the working of Parliament.

Any future plans for the second chamber should include provision for a much smaller membership. In the meantime, an immediate step could be the introduction of an upper age limit of, say, 80 years of age for hereditary and life peers to participate in the business of the Lords.

Now that we have a fixed retiring age for judges it would be appropriate to do the same for those who are part of the law-making process.

Yours faithfully,  
ALAN J. KENNARD,  
4 Ashburnham Close, N2.  
August 11.

## Nothing to brag about?

From Mr Phil Smith

Sir, What a shame that Mehryn Bragg ("Is Jerusalem being built here?", *Arts*, August 11) should waste his wide-ranging powers of intellect on eulogising something as creepy as new Labour. Up here in Burnley over the last ten days I've heard not so much the "roar of energy and ideas" as the creak of just another government settling in to enjoy power and look after itself.

After all, what are governments for? And aren't writers and artists supposed to be there to make life as uncomfortable and difficult as possible for them?

Tony Blair may be taking Mr Bragg and his chums with him into some new Jerusalem, but here amongst what's left of the Satanic mills the unemployed, the poor, the old and the sick are still waiting for the call.

Yours faithfully,  
PHIL SMITH,  
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Holme-in-Cliviger,  
Burnley, Lancashire.  
August 11.

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DEGREE vacancies in engineering, technology and science are published here for students chasing courses still available at universities and colleges this autumn.

The listings have been fully updated since they first appeared in *The Times* on Thursday, taking account of those which have been filled but also many unexpected vacancies just announced.

Vacancies declared in the past 24 hours include human biology, zoology and ecology at Leeds, food and human nutrition at Newcastle, marine and environmental biology at St Andrews and chemistry at Nottingham.

*The Times* features a 14-page supplement on Monday with a completely updated list of all degree vacancies.

Courses are part of modular schemes, in a variety of combinations. All other courses are identified by codes used in the Ucas handbook.

## AERONAUTICS

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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

SATURDAY AUGUST 16 1997



David Steene, a director of CMC, which specialises in loans to low-income borrowers, helped to fund William Hague's leadership campaign

## Tory donor tied to US fraudsters

DAVID STEENE, the businessman who donated £20,000 to William Hague's Tory leadership campaign, is this weekend revealed to be running a business with links to United States fraudsters.

Mr Steene is managing director of City Mortgage Corporation, the much-criticised lender to people on low incomes. Cityscape, CMC's parent company in the United States was helped onto the Nasdaq market by Abraham Salzman, a convicted stock market manipulator.

And on every loth that it makes in the UK, CMC will pay a commission to Richard Botchman, a businessman who was involved in a property scandal in the United States. When it became apparent in the US that Botchman was a major shareholder in Cityscape, the company's shares plummeted.

This week, CMC agreed to review its entire loan portfolio.

Leaders of last resort, page 27

## Markets nervous as FTSE falls 125 points

By GRAHAM SEARJEANT

WORLD financial markets slithered nervously into another nail-biting weekend as share prices fell sharply in London, New York, Frankfurt and Hong Kong.

The FTSE 100 index of blue chips tumbled 125.5 points to 4,865.8, ending at its worst for the day. The 2.8 per cent fall was proportionately the biggest on one day for eight years.

In New York, bond prices fell back again. In volatile share trading, the Dow Jones industrial average fell 130 points by mid-afternoon to 7,911. In Europe, German share prices ended 3 per cent lower in Frankfurt and Swiss shares shed an average 1.5 per cent in Zurich. Most continental markets were shut for the Feast of the Assumption.

Earlier, the Hang Seng

index had fallen 2.4 per cent in Hong Kong. Shares in the HSBC banking group, a top stock in both Hong Kong and London, dropped 7 per cent through the day.

As on the previous Friday, when falls on Wall Street sent jitters round the world, price changes were exaggerated in thin August trading and securities markets took their cue from the foreign exchanges.

The dollar was again weak, particularly against the mark. On Thursday, it had traded at about DM1.84, but quickly fell to DM1.815, amid unsubstantiated speculation that the Bundesbank had bought marks for dollars, before settling at about DM1.82.

The pound also recovered against the dollar, rising two cents to \$1.6093, but fell mar-

ginally against the mark. The Sterling Index edged up from 101.8 to 102.1.

Credence was given to another interview with a member of the Bundesbank council, which meets again next week. It confirmed that the German central bank could allow its repo rate to drift up to support the currency. The mark's weakness against a strong dollar lies at the heart of market anxieties.

Pressure on the dollar translated to falls in US Treasury bonds and thence into shares. Europe took its cue from Wall Street, ignoring other signals from the foreign exchanges.

In New York and London at least, the expiry during the day of quarterly share index options also exacerbated price falls. In London, prices had

held up early, then dropped suddenly in late morning, suggesting that share values may have been held up artificially earlier in the week.

Securities houses reported no big selling. As before, there was little anxiety in London, as in New York, that shares might be overvalued, making them vulnerable to a change of sentiment and trend.

A sharp contrast was maintained in London between the behaviour of the big internationally traded blue chips, such as leading banks and pharmaceuticals houses, and the main bulk of domestic shares. The FTSE 250, which covers big companies outside the FTSE 100, actually rose on the day, albeit only by 0.1 per cent. The index of small companies also edged up.

## BSkyB profits rise to £314m

By OUR CITY STAFF

PRE-TAX profits at British Sky Broadcasting rose 22 per cent to £314 million in the year to end June. Shares in the satellite broadcaster, however, fell 33p to 437p.

Sari Chisholm, the BSkyB chief executive who retired in December, said of the profits: "This is an impressive performance. Debt levels have been reduced at a time when the company is investing for the future." He also said that maintaining current profit levels next year would be a "spectacular" achievement, a comment that was initially taken by the market as a profits warning.

Later in the day, the company explained that it fully expected to remain as profitable next year in spite of the digital investment, which will see the launch of about 200 channels and services, including near video-on-demand and home shopping.

BSkyB, which is 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of *The Times*, reported a sales rise of 26 per cent to £1.27 billion. The figure was boosted by a £14.4 million payment from British Digital Broadcasting, the new digital terrestrial broadcaster that is to buy premium channels from BSkyB.

Subscription revenue was up 24 per cent to £1.1 billion, while advertising revenue grew 36 per cent to £150 million as the company added 878,000 direct-to-home and cable subscribers, taking its total to 6.37 million.

Analysis said the results contained no real surprises, though the cost of entertainment channels, up 40 per cent to £90.9 million in the year, was "ballooning". A final dividend of 3.25p, to be paid on November 14, takes the total dividend up 9 per cent to 6p.

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STOCK MARKET INDICES			
FTSE 100	4865.8	(-125.5)	
Yield	3.45%	(-0.01%)	
FTSE All share	2302.40	(-43.92)	
Nikkei	18325.09	(+103.41)	
New York	7863.52	(-78.51)	
Dow Jones	7911.00	(-130.00)	
S&P Composite	916.19	(-8.58)	
US RATE			
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(9%)	
Long Bond	5 3/4%	(67%)	
Yield	6.55%	(8.55%)	
LONDON MONEY			
3-mth Interbank	7 1/4%	(7 1/4%)	
Life long gilt	11 1/4%	(11 1/4%)	
Future (Sep)	11 1/4%	(11 1/4%)	
STERLING			
New York	1.6087	(1.5915)	
London	1.6101	(1.5987)	
DM	1.8101	(2.9293)	
DM	2.5075	(2.9293)	
FF	9.8948	(9.8112)	
SF	2.4164	(1.4158)	
Yen	185.47	(187.08)	
E Index	102.1	(101.8)	
DOLLAR			
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## A&L opens way for special payout

By ROBERT MILLER, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

ALLIANCE & LEICESTER has ruled out a foreign purchase with its £800 million cash pile, leaving the way open for a special dividend payout for more than two million shareholders.

Peter White, chief executive of the building society turned bank, said A&L was looking for an acquisition that would add "more profitable customers and more profitable products". He added: "We have no foreign adventures planned."

Alliance & Leicester, which unveiled interim pre-tax profits down 3 per cent at £178 million after conversion costs of £28 million, rewarded 2.4 shareholders with a maiden half-time dividend of 6.4p.

payable on October 20. If there is spare money after any acquisitions shareholders could receive a special dividend.

The mortgage and savings arm of Alliance & Leicester contributed £128 million to group profits against £122 million last time. Net new lending soared to £527 million (£131 million), representing a 4.5 per cent market share. Profits from the personal banking division were £42 million (£38 million).

Commercial banking profits, which include Girobank and the group's leasing business, remained unchanged at £30 million.

Tempus, page 28

## NIE seeks review over price-setting

By MARK COURT

NORTHERN Ireland Electricity is plotting to drag its regulator through the courts in a move that could set a vital precedent in ending the powers of utility regulators.

NIE yesterday sought a judicial review after Douglas McIldeon, Northern Ireland's electricity regulator, refused to follow the recommendations of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The MMC, which acts as umpire in disputes between utilities and regulators, was called in because Mr McIldeon wanted NIE to cut its distribution prices by 30 per cent whereas the company wanted a cut of 22 per cent.

The MMC settled on 25 per cent but Mr McIldeon is insisting on 29 per cent.

Nigel Hawkins, analyst at Yamaichi, said: "This has implications beyond NIE in terms of the whole regulated sector. We have major reviews of water and electricity in the year 2000. Many of them could end up at the MMC so the question is: 'Would its rulings be final?'"

Utility bosses are following the row with intense interest. The chief executive of one said: "A regulator has never been tested like this before. It would be much healthier if the whole process was more open, but that would require changes in the law."

## Mortgages rise for one in three

By CAROLINE MERRELL

THE mortgage war warmed up after the Halifax, Nationwide and Woolwich, which together provide mortgages for more than a third of Britain's borrowers, announced 0.25 percentage point increases in rates.

The increases are in line with the 0.25 point rise in base rates announced last week. The move by Halifax, the UK's biggest lending institution, will almost certainly be followed by lenders that have not yet announced increases.

The rises mean that borrowers with the

Halifax, now a bank, will have to pay interest rates of 8.45 per cent, a rate matched later by the Woolwich. Borrowers with the Nationwide Building Society, which last month fought to stay mutual, will pay a lower rate of 8.1 per cent.

A Halifax borrower with a £50,000 interest-only loan will now pay £320 a month, an increase of £9.48. A borrower with an identical mortgage from Nationwide will pay £307 a month — an annual saving over the Halifax of £150.

Nationwide is offering lower mortgage rates than its main rivals as part of a £200

million bid to promote mutualism. The mortgage rates of Abbey National, Cheltenham & Gloucester, Alliance & Leicester and Woolwich are all in line with the rates offered by the Halifax. Nationwide also claims that its mutual status will allow it to offer better savings rates.

The rate rise is the fourth since the change of Government. Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, the bank, says base rates may rise further because about a quarter of the UK's ten million borrowers have fixed-rate loans, making rate rises less effective in controlling inflation.

## STARS OVER THEIR FIRST 10 YEARS



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Bar chart: \*Offer to bid, net income reinvested 1.8.87-1.8.97. Source: Micropal. †Excluding UK. Five year performance to 1.8.97: Jupiter Income +233% (1st out of 80 sector funds); FTSE All Share +127%; Jupiter European +239% (2nd out of 108 sector funds); FTSE European Index +163.0%; offer to bid, net income reinvested. Source: Micropal.

To: Investor Support, Jupiter Unit Trust Managers Ltd, Knightsbridge House, 197 Knightsbridge, London SW7 1RB.

Please send me further information on: The Jupiter Income/European Funds ☐ The Jupiter PEP ☐ Jupiter Unit Trusts ☐

Print Name (Mr/Ms/Mr) \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

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**You can judge  
a company by  
the company  
that it keeps**

firm has long-standing connections with David Steene and Martin Brand, CMC's lending director. The pair used to run Northmount Securities, a north London finance company that dealt with Capital Credit's director, Anthony Murtagh, in the early 1990s.

David Steene, managing director of CMC. Total pay package last year: \$1 million. A solicitor, Mr Steene is a former Conservative councillor for Hertsmeir Borough Council. He became involved in the lending market in 1980 and has sat on the board of numerous lending companies, including Northmount Securities, a firm that employed Martin Brand (now CMC's director of lending). Much of his business came through Anthony Murtagh, a broker now at Capital Credit. With Gerald Epstein, now CMC's finance director, he met Jay Boitchman in 1994.

After a complaint by Paul Flynn, a Labour MP, he apologised to the House. Mr Clappison has withdrawn his researcher's pass.

□ Abraham Salaman. Convicted stock manipulator who helped Cityscape, CMC's US subsidiary, to launch on the Nasdaq stock exchange in April 1994. The Securities and Exchange Commission, the US regulator of stock markets, fined Mr Salaman and banned him from the securities business for three years in 1974 for his involvement in the Magic Marker fraud. Mr Salaman received Cityscape stock as reward for his role in the flotation. Last summer he sold 100,000 Cityscape shares for two deals, the second at \$32 a share against the flotation price of \$1 per share. Cityscape says that Mr Salaman has had no subsequent involvement with the company and is not a significant shareholder.

□ **Jay Botchman**, Former consultant to Citicorp who was instrumental in establishing CMC, its UK subsidiary. He still receives a fee from every loan originated in the UK. Mr Botchman is an associate of John Peter Galanis, currently serving a 25-year sentence in a New York jail for masterminding a property development scam in Atlantic City. Mr Botchman sold on the non-existent property partnerships to investors. He has never been convicted and claims he was a victim of the fraud too. Mr Botchman has been active in the US lending market for years; one of his companies, Alliance Funding, securitised loans for Citicorp. When it was revealed last year that he owned 15 per cent of the stock, the share price collapsed. Citicorp says he has sold all his holdings and has never had a day-to-day management role in the company. However, concerns about his influence remain.

□ **Capital Credit of Truro.** A master broker for CMC run by Anthony Murtagh and Gerald Heslop. Both directors of eight companies associated with Richard Murtagh (Anthony's father) Holdings, whose consumer credit licences were withdrawn by the Office of Fair Trading in 1989 for deceitful and oppressive lending. Capital Credit, formerly Carrox, won an appeal and survived.

□ **James Clappison, Conservative MP for Hertsmere.** A former underwriter at Lloyd's of London. Mr Clappison's constituency takes in Watford where CMC is based. In 1996 the Department for the Environment put CMC on its list of approved lenders for the Government's right-to-buy programme. Mr Clappison says he passed the application to colleagues and had no further involvement.

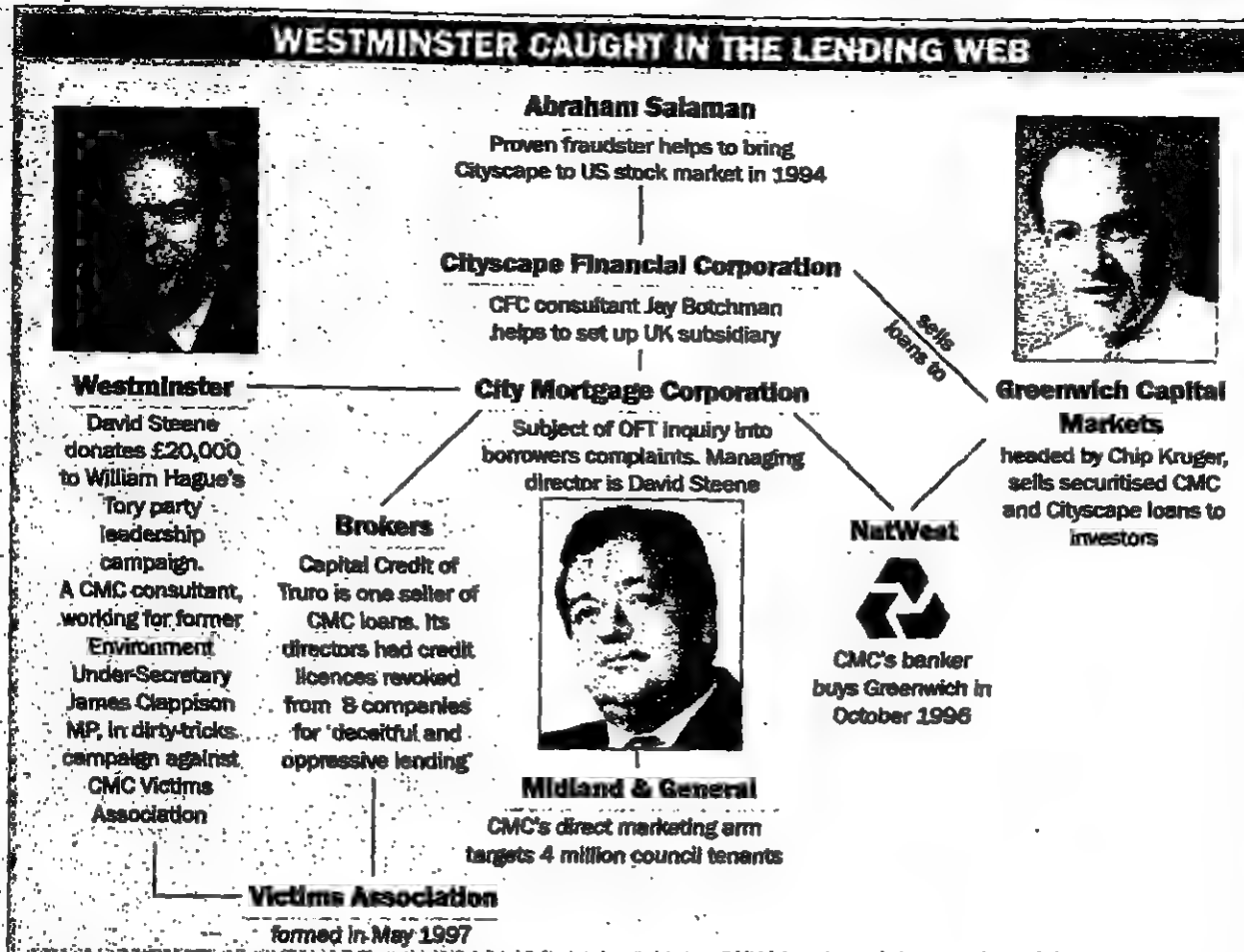
□ Stewart Pollock. Researcher to James Clappison; also fundraiser and director of Conservative Friends of Israel, a lobby group whose members include Mr Clappison, David Steene and William Hague. Has been a consultant for CMC since 1995. Last month he distributed negative material to MPs concerning Carol Riley, the organiser of a successful anti-CMC campaign.

In the United States there is growing uneasiness over the activities of Cityscape and its UK subsidiary, Moody's, a US agency which rates bonds, has recently downgraded the group's corporate debt in reaction to the OFT's move and the rising number of its loans that it says are more than 90 days in arrears. Cityscape disputes Moody's figures and says that its foreclosure rates are reducing.

**M**r Steene is a former Conservative councillor in Hertsmere, Hertfordshire, where his local MP is James Clappison. In early 1996 the DoE, where Mr Clappison was under-secretary, approved CMC as a lender on the Government's right-to-buy scheme, just one year after the company was incorporated. This opened the way to thousands of new customers, many of whom would be vulnerable to approaches from a lender such as CMC. Mr Clappison insists that he passed the application to colleagues to avoid any conflict of interest and was doing further to do with it.

Cityscape and CMC have been last-movers. It was only April 1994 when Cityscape floated on the US Nasdaq stock exchange. Central to the flotation was Abraham Salaman, a convicted US stock manipulator, who helped Cityscape to merge with a shell company called Mandi of Essex.

Shortly after that, David Steene met Jay Botchman, a consultant to Cityscape with an unfortunate business record in the US, and with his help, launched the UK end of the operation.



highly successful at tapping into the profitable and relatively unregulated UK lending market. CMC has grown into this country's largest "non-standard" lender, specialising in loans to people with poor credit ratings who are unable to get finance from traditional lenders. In the last quarter it made a \$15.7 million (£9.8 million) gain from selling its loans.

However, CMC has come under fire for the level of interest rates, fees and redemption penalties that it levies on its loans, as well as the predatory selling tactics of its brokers. These pro-

voked the Office of Fair Trading to launch an inquiry into the company. Last month, under pressure from Nigel Griffiths, the Consumer Affairs Minister, the OFT outlawed the worst of these practices in the industry. CMC has implemented the OFT guidelines on new loans but has done nothing as yet about existing borrowers. Instead, David Steere, the managing director, this week announced a review of all its UK loans and promised to investigate any evidence of malpractice by the company or its brokers.

If the cases we highlight

below are typical. Mr Steene who earned just under \$1 million (\$625,000) last year may find he needs to radically restructure CMC's portfolio. A near-blind taxidriver does not constitute a good credit risk for any lender, but there is just such an individual now finding it impossible to meet the payments CMC is demanding on his loan.

The company uses a network of brokers to find its business, and several of these are accused of selling loans to individuals who simply do not have the earning capacity to service them. Such loans

will, inevitably, go bad but CMC manages to make it money by selling on a portfolio of loans to other financiers, taking its profits on the deal at a relatively early stage.

We have found that one of CMC's "master brokers" Capital Credit in Truro, Cornwall, is run by individuals who have already been directors of eight firms that were effectively closed down by the OFT for their lending practices.

This year Capital Credit has threatened to repossess the home of a paraplegic in Plymouth (see below). The

## Critics claim agents target clients who will fall behind

**C**ity Mortgage Corporation and Cityscape both distribute a large number of their loans through brokers, paying up to 10 per cent of the value of the loans in commission upfront. Concerns have been raised on both sides of the Atlantic that these agents target those who will be unable to repay the loans so as to repossess their houses. Here we highlight four cases involving alleged broker malpractice. All the borrowers are alleging extortion against the lenders. CMC refused to discuss the cases claiming to do so would infringe the Data Protection Act.

A 73-year-old pensioner in the North of England is fighting repossession against CMC. In 1985 the former BR employee, whose monthly income was £400, had problems paying the mortgage to his bank. He approached Latham Finance, a broker in Newcastle-under-Lyme, after seeing its advert in a national paper and inquired about a remortgage. The man, who is partially sighted, claims a Latham employee told him to state he was a taxi driver earning £20,000 a year and encouraged him to sign documents without reading them. Even on CMC's so-called prompt payment scheme the man ended up paying £344 a month and £200 more if he was late. By November 1995 he was £1,635.50 in arrears.

The Times has previously highlighted the plight of a Latham Finance client. Jennifer Carnegie (pictured), manager of a nursery in Romford, Essex, claimed the broker never explained the redemption penalty. She tried to sell her house for £38,000 to repay the loan early only to find the penalty had risen to £60,000.

The third case involves Capital Credit, the master broker in Toronto. Its directors have been involved in firms closed down by the OTC. Last year a 59-year-old paraplegic with severe head injuries from a road accident 12 years ago, was in difficulty with his £20,000 Halifax mortgage. Needing £3,000, he responded to a newspaper advertisement from Midland & General, a Wolverhampton finance company (bought by CMC in May) and now the centre of CMC's direct marketing operations.) His

call was passed to Capital Credit and a representative called at his specially converted three-bedroom terrace house in Plymouth in November. He lives on £629 a month from income support and disability benefit and claims the representative persuaded him to transfer his mortgage and debts to CMC. He signed up for a 25-year mortgage of £32,500 and was given a £3,000 cashback. Almost at once he was in arrears. By February he was more than £800 in debt and CMC was threatening repossession. He was saved only by the intervention of his carer, who paid the debt and sought legal advice.

Although refusing to comment on the details, David Steene, CMC's managing director, insists that his company buys and monitors its brokers.

There are, as in any business, individual complaints from customers that unfortunately arise at the time of a borrower's default. It is an easy defence to say my broker did x, y or z, but the fact that a director of a

company lost his license does not mean he is guilty of anything in so far as the company [Capital Credit] with which we trade has a license... So far, I am not aware of any action against the company by the OFI, and our own internal monitoring does not reveal anything of a material nature which causes us to have concern."

An equally ugly case is battling its way through the U.S. courts. Grover and Maimie Belcher, a couple from New York State, are fighting repossession of their home by the Chemical Bank, which bought their loan from Alliance Funding, a company run by Jay Boichman, the former Cityscape consultant. The couple allege they are victims of a predatory lending scheme. In January 1991, three years before Cityscape floated, the couple were called on by three men claiming to be representatives of the firm. At the time they ran a child care business from their home and earned about \$1,300 a month. The couple expressed

interest in an \$8,000 home improvement loan. The next month they were told that the bank had approved for \$85,000. The couple's solicitor claims that Robert Grosser, Cityscape's chief executive, personally authorised the increased loan once the company had appraised the value of the home. Within two days they were driven to the offices of Fink Weinberger to close the deal. Fink Weinberger is the law firm of Asher Fensterheim, a non-executive director with Cityscape. The Belchers claim there was no attempt to explain that the interest rate would be 17 per cent, that the monthly payment would be \$1,400 or that nearly 17 per cent of the loan would go in charges, including \$4,250 to Cityscape and \$6,800 to Countrywide Capital, a mortgage broker with whom it had an agreement. After signing documents they were given a cheque and taken to the offices of Regency Remodeling, a home improvement company, to which they were personally handed over the money. This company finally built a fence and returned \$40,000 to the Belchers. Over the next 18 months before they fell into arrears and Chemical Bank started repossession, the Belchers paid out a total of \$35,000. By the end they still owned \$84,000.

Amazingly, three years later, this loan was still listed as part of the package of debt bought by the Chemical Bank.

Cityscape said the Belcher case was unique and that the loan was not a typical one. It says it has stopped doing business with Countrywide. However, Howard Gosin, the officer at Countrywide at the time of the Belcher loan now runs a company called All States Consulting and is still doing business with Cityscape.

In an echo of *Capital Credit* in the UK, *Coastal Credit*, another important US broker for Cityscape, is run by Mitchell and Melvin Gale, officers in Dartmouth Funding, a finance company that surrendered its licence in March 1990 after being sued for fraud by the Connecticut and New York State Attorney Generals.

Cityscape says the US market is heavily regulated and that it only uses licensed and registered brokers.

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INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE SINCE LAUNCH* NOV 95 TO JULY 97		
	ANNUAL CHANGE	GROWTH
Legal & General	0.50%	+0.21%
Centmore	1.00%	38.84%
Kleinwort Benson	1.00%	36.52%
Wegis	1.00%	58.25%
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STOCK MARKET

CLARE STEWART

# Second liners once again mop up buyers' cash

THE stock market began the week bracing itself for a bloodbath. It failed to materialise until yesterday when shares registered a hefty 125.5 point fall, wiping £25 billion off prices.

Several reasons were advanced to explain the sharp turnaround. They ranged from the mid-morning options expiry to concerns over a sell-off on Wall Street. Added into the mix was a hot Friday in mid-August, with relatively few active in the market.

One dealer said: "It was a reaction people had been looking for and the options expiry triggered the move."

Others were surprised by the size of the fall. Another dealer said: "A massive over-reaction and overdone." In spite of talk of profit-taking he added there was little sign of stock in search of buyers.

Notable casualties dragging the FTSE lower included HSBC, which dropped 100½p to £21.07½, after an overnight fall in Hong Kong.

The rot set in yesterday after the options expiry and the market was left without support. With the opening fall on Wall Street, there was little to bolster confidence.

By the close the FTSE had fallen to 4,865.8, with the Dow Jones industrial average nursing a fall of 122.6. With few FTSE 100 stocks making progress, it was left to second liners once again to mop up buyers' cash. The FTSE 250 closed 8.3 points higher at 4,698.2.

Banks ended lower, while drinks groups again attracted attention.

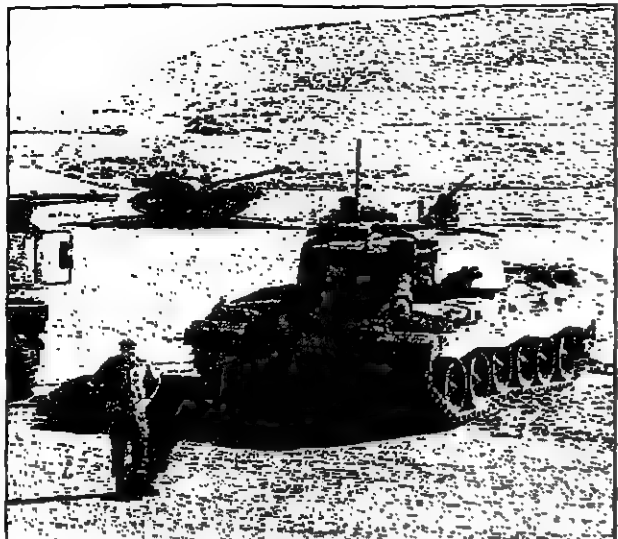
The beginning of the football season brought the quoted clubs back on to the pitch, while exporters gained during the week from sterling's weakness against the dollar and the mark.

Overall, volumes remained relatively thin with only about 730 million shares traded.

The figure was boosted by a placing of 69 million shares in Sears, the retail group that includes Selfridges, at 58p. The whippers were of stake-building moves by PDM.

Sears shares ended 2p lower at 59½p. The group also announced the sale of 65 of its British Shoe Corporation concessions for £9 million.

Among the top performers in the top 100 shares was AB Foods, down 38½p to 498½p, with speculation resurfacing about its interest in



Under fire: defence stocks were rattled by an audit report

Tate & Lyle. The sugar group closed off just 2p at 418½p. Unilever was also a heavy loser after recent broker comment, ending down 72½p at £17.52½p.

Among the few blue chip stocks bucking the trend was Hanson, which rallied after results on Thursday. The price rose 10p in early trading, but ended just 2p ahead to 306p.

Hotel shares were given a boost by positive City talk with Merrill Lynch, the broker, looking for value in the sector. The current rating is seen as undemanding. Jarvis Hotels ended 3½p higher at 61p, with Millennium & Copthorne up 1p to 400p. Stakis was up 2p to 108p, while Thistle Hotels rose 1½p to 146p.

Utilities offered a safer haven in the market turbulence, with National Grid pointing on 6p to 250p, while ScottishPower after early rises closed unchanged at 429p. Wessex Water rose 8½p to 485½p.

Northern Ireland Electricity rose 8½p to 444½p after it said that it would seek a judicial review over the refusal by the Director-General of Electricity Supply for Northern Ireland to accept the decision of the MMC on price

terms in the US. Demand for the Series 5 computer was also said to be lifting Pson, which rose 15p to 376½p. Mersey Docks also made headway, with consideration of recent results pushing the shares 14p higher to 430p.

BSkyB was marked 33p lower to 437p, a fall of 7 per cent, on concerns over levels of future growth and some disappointment over the dividend.

EMI dropped 18p to 547p because of worries over declining

ing sales of classical music.

Defence stocks were rattled by a National Audit Office report revealing delays and costly overruns in a number of Ministry of Defence contracts. GKN fell back 20½p to £12.65. British Aerospace was down 31p to £14.71, and Vickers fell 7½p to £20½p.

LVMH, the luxury goods group, further reduced its stake in Guinness, selling ten million shares at 58½p each. LVMH, which is seeking to scupper the Guinness/GrandMet merger now holds 11.47 per cent in Guinness, which ended at 581½p, down 3½p yesterday.

Eidos, the computer games group, dived 102½p to 447½p after doubling its first-quarter losses and concerns over talk of an inquiry into share dealings. Games Workshop continued to benefit from recent figures and put on a further 15p to 63½p.

Graystone, the engineering group, was hit after a profit warning and an announcement that bid talks had come to an end. The shares ended down 42p at 39½p, a new low for the year.

A profits warning also sent Portman Pottery lower. The shares fell 65p lower to 430p, their lowest point for two years.

Wace, the printing group, fell back after delivering a warning over future profits growth. The shares closed at 27½p, down 5p.

Johnson Group Cleaners added 3p to 226½p after first-half figures, while late news of a second profit warning and the resignation of the chief executive left Abi Leisure, the caravan group, down 27p to 38p.

GILT-EDGED: The markets were left unscathed by the equities sell-off and saw little action with little data to chew on. In futures, the September series of the long gilt finished off £92 at £114½, with the number of completed contracts just 28,000.

Treasury 8 per cent 2000 closed off £92 at £102½, while at the long end, Treasury 8 per cent 2015 ended £7½ at £109½.

NEW YORK: The Dow Jones industrial average lost more than 100 points in early trading on weakness in the bond market, earnings worries and volatility related to the expiration of options. At midday, the index was down 78.51 points to 7,863.52.

## MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday)	
Dow Jones	7863.52 (-78.51)
S&P Composite	916.19 (-8.58)
Tokyo	
Nikkei Average	19326.03 (-103.41)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	10096.06 (-100.83)
Amsterdam	
EOE Index	894.42 (-11.17)
Sydney	
ASX	2866.2 (-28.8)
Frankfurt	
DAX	4152.86 (-78.57)
Singapore	
State	1993.80 (-42.03)
Brussels	
General	Closed
Paris	
CAC-40	Closed
Zurich	
SEA Gen	1187.80 (-13.10)
London	
FTSE 100	4865.8 (-125.5)
FTSE 250	4698.2 (-46.3)
FTSE 350	2259.4 (-40.2)
FTSE 1000	2638.97 (-34.7)
FTSE All-Share	2302.4 (-43.92)
FTSE Non Financials	2304.56 (-38.15)
FTSE Financials	1254.54 (-12.54)
FTSE Govt Sec	96.73 (-0.12)
Bargains	45467
SEAQ Volume	808.5M
US\$	1.6095 (£0.6222)
German Mark	2.9272 (£0.2222)
Exchange Index	102.1 (+0.3)
Bank of England official cash rate	4.75%
ESBR	1.1679
RPI	197.5 Jul (3.3%) Jan 1987-100
RPIX	190.4 Jul (3.0%) Jan 1987-100

## RECENT ISSUES

Antofagasta	410
Billiton	234
Biztek Clothing	80
Bristol a Wen Pfl	108
Cannell Ltd	138
EMI	515
Fairfield Enis	117
Fairprice Consulting	3
GR Holdings	55
Galen Holdings	195
Hellon Publis	99
Ionica Group	373
Kingfisher Leisure	175
LECO	78
Landround	94
Mezoline	307
Reaume Merin	108
SBS Group	108
Sevent Trent B	34
Servant Warrants	50
Thorn	30
Vigint Technology	65

## RIGHTS ISSUES

Golden Land n/p (21)	2½
Logica n/p (605)	21½

## MAJOR CHANGES

RISSE	302½p (+14p)
Finet Adv	472½p (+21p)
Advised	376½p (+15p)
Pison	376½p (+15p)
Vaux Group	286p (+10p)
Croda	340p (+10p)
FALLS	
Graystone	39½p (-42p)
ABI Ltd	38p (-27p)
Outlook Group	122½p (-10p)
Wolsley	453½p (-25p)
Reckard	285½p (-11p)
EMI	547p (-18p)
Greenpeace	305½p (-15p)
Allied Irish	637½p (-15p)
Bark Scotland	411½p (-11p)
Ek of Ireland	730p (-21p)
Molins	592½p (-17½p)
Imperial Tob	393½p (-12½p)

Closing Prices Page 37

## TEMPUS

### White moment awaited

IT WOULD be quite understandable if Peter White were to develop the nervous habit of continually glancing over his shoulder. As chief executive of the Alliance & Leicester he must know that there are a number of acquisitive financial institutions, foreign as well as British, running the slide rule over his recently converted building society — even if there have been no formal approaches.

But he must also keep his eyes peeled on the road ahead, looking out for businesses to buy, as he has committed the A&L to doing, with some of the £800 million of surplus cash he is sitting on. Of course, once he has done that deal his five-year protection from hostile bids automatically drops away. But at this stage it is academic — the prices for any decent business Mr White may wish to acquire are far too high and squandering the bank's new-

found wealth would be hard to justify to shareholders. Mr White has said that he is not looking at foreign deals but wants something that brings "more profitable customers and more profitable products".

What may allow Mr White a little breathing space while he casts around for the perfect deal is that A&L's share price is pretty "tippy". Before A&L's flotation in April, the forecast share price range was between 450p and 415p. Last night it closed at 621½p. By any reasonable analysis, even in these heady days for the banking sector, that is a very generous valuation. A relatively generous dividend policy and the chance of a special dividend makes the shares worth hanging onto, with the added excitement that A&L might attract a bid as the financial services market consolidates.

## Wace

TREVOR GRICE has given and Trevor Grice has taken away — but the name of Trevor Grice will be anything but blessed in the City of London.

The same man who rescued Wace from near collapse has knocked it back down to its knees again in the space of four years, and the share price has already fallen by a staggering 70 per cent in the course of this year alone.

Mr Grice cannot shrug away any of the blame. Each downfall has been a strategy blunder.

Its cost-cutting in America has prompted its staff to flee and take their clients with them. Every section of yesterday's report contained woe-filled farewells to large paying clients.

The trouble was expected.

## Flextech

WHEN Flextech arrived on the scene in the early 1990s, no one took it seriously. Here was a former oil services company that decided British coal potholes wanted more choice in their TV viewing. Flextech recruited a few big-name American sponsors and has since become the second-largest provider of subscription channels, after BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster. The shares have soared this year, though they are well off their peak.

While Flextech has its critics — it has never made a profit and seems in no hurry to do so — the company has collected so many basic channels that no multichannel operator can afford to ignore it.

Currently, Flextech simply sells the broadcast rights to individual channels and collects a fee, depending on how many viewers it attracts. It has no brand and no platform, a term that refers to the

## Wace

technical ability to supply the channels and bill viewing subscribers.

Setting itself up as an integrated broadcaster, in which it would package and brand its own channels, buy others from third parties and provide the means for customers to pay for them might be the way to go as the market develops.

The problem, of course, is that it would cost a fortune to duplicate BSkyB's subscriber management system, though Flextech may be able to find a partner with the expertise to cobble one together.

Flextech's future would be brighter if it found a way to keep more of the revenue generated by its channels. The shares, however, remain a long-term buy.

## Bunzl

ANOTHER good foray across the Atlantic drove the paper and plastics company's shares up yesterday to a 1997 high. The Unisource deal

## Wace

makes sense. Bunzl is buying a loss-making competitor, part of a massive paper distribution company that isn't really keen on the supermarket-supplies sector.

It will merge the business into an operation that already makes a 7 per cent profit on sales, and wait for the benefits to roll in, with the potential of an extra £21 million (£13 million) in profit a year.

Some of the Unisource business's losses are due to Bunzl's success in the US market. Bunzl snaffled \$30 million of supermarket supplies from a rival, and the deal will be a way to keep more of the revenue generated by its channels. The shares, however, remain a long-term buy.

## Bunzl

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further to go: buy before sterling weakens against the dollar, increasing the cost of this attractive growth opportunity.

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## MOVERS OF THE WEEK

Current price	Week's change	After results
MAID	+2.50p	Acquisition plans
Royal Bank of Scotland 602p	+27½p	Acquisition plans
Brent 15 day (oil)	+23p	Broker comment
Alfred Domco	+21p	Currency values
BTR	+21p	Profit taking
BT	+21p	Profit taking
Usher TV	+19p	Profit taking
Games Workshop	+11p	Profit taking
Pearson	+7½p	Profit taking
HSBC	+21.67p	Weak Far East markets

## COMMODITIES

ICIS-LOR (London 600p)			GENI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES		
CRUDE OILS (\$/barrel FOB)			LIFE WHEAT (cwt)		
Brent 15-day	18.40	-0.25	Dec 1/8	74.50	74.25
Brent 1-month	18.00	-0.25	Nov	74.50	74.25
Brent 3-month	18.00	-0.25	Oct	74.50	74.25
Brent 6-month	18.00	-0.25	Sept	74.50	74.25
WTI 15-day (New)	19.15	-0.25	Aug	74.50	74.25
WTI 1-month (New)	20.20	-0.40	July	74.50	74.25
WTI 3-month (New)	20.20	-0.40	June	74.50	74.25
WTI 6-month (New)	20.30	-0.25	May	74.50	74.25
			Volume: 390		Volume: 70
PRODUCTS (\$/MT)			LIFE POTATO (lb)		
Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)			Open		Close
Gas Oil	Bid	Offer	11/20		11/20
Crucial Ltd.	224.13	227.31	Nov		11.70
Genam LLC	170.40	171.95	ADP		74.0
3-Fuel	92.19	92.19			48
Naphtha	148.12	149.24			
LIFE FUTURES (GENI Lb)			RUBBER (No 1 RSS Cx 10)		
GAS OIL			Sep 15 to 20.07.15		
Gen	171.25-171.50	Dec 174.75-175.00			
Brent	174.00-174.25	Jan 176.25-176.50	Aug		Close
Nov	174.25-174.50	Vol 6000	11/20	1315	1317
BRENT			Sept		1320
Oct	174.00-174.25	Jan 179.10	11/20	1320	1320
Nov	174.25-174.50	Feb 179.10	11/20	1320	1320
Dec	174.25-174.50	Mar 179.10	11/20	1320	1320
Jan	174.25-174.50	Vol 13350	11/20	1320	1320
			Index 1293 Vol		
(Official) (Volume pres day)			LONDON METAL EXCHANGE		
Copper day 4-15 minutes			Jan 22.0-22.50		
Copper 3 months			Jan 22.0-22.50		
3-year day 4-15 minutes			Jan 22.0-22.50		
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## WAITING GAME 35

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patience  
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WEEKEND  
MONEY

## CARDS MARKED 31

Worried by  
use of  
Visa number



THE TIMES: PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

When will the  
bubble burst?

Crash fears are prevalent but  
Adam Jones and Caroline Merrell  
remain confident for a new era

This week share prices on global markets were nearly 100 per cent higher than at the start of this particular bull run in 1990. According to an analysis by Templeton, the global investment house, a rise of this size has in the past been followed by a 25 per cent fall in the value of shares. The falls are not always sharp corrections, as experienced in 1997. They may be spread over several years.

Meanwhile, an analysis by Merrill Lynch, the securities house, showed that many of the UK's biggest pension fund managers were increasing their holdings of cash.

But a survey by *The Times* found only a few committed bears among fund managers. Few predict a sudden sharp fall in the indices and the bursting of the stock market bubble. Some speculate that we may have entered a new period for the markets, where share prices may defy the normal rules.

In the City many are furiously studying American experience to discover the future for the London market. Wall Street has long struggled off predictions of a share slump. Strong economic growth has so far failed to cause the inflation that would make equity yields unattractive to buyers. Analysts ask whether European economies are at the same stage of development as the US earlier this decade. If the answer is yes, then stock markets could continue to rise.

Brian Bielinski, an analyst at Salomon Brothers, believes there are parallels to the US a couple of years ago, which include persistent growth in

productivity allowing company profits to keep rising without similar-sized increases in costs such as salaries. But he argues that much of this may already be factored into current prices. Salomon smells a Wall Street fall, the so-called "correction", in the second half of 1997.

This week, there were indications, temporarily at least, that European markets can continue to rise. The London stock market had started the week under a cloud after a fall on Wall Street late the previous Friday. Many speculated that it might signal the end of the UK's bull run.

Doom merchants were confounded but, after yesterday's falls, the market will start next week under the same cloud. Drawing on renewed optimism waiting over from the US, which was quickly forging its earlier stumble, the UK index recovered, then drifted round the 5,000 mark after a brief fall on Monday morning.

Until yesterday, prices had held in the face of some testing economic data. On Wednesday unemployment was shown to be at its lowest level for 17 years. But earnings growth remained stable, calming inflation fears.

In the longer run, the pessimists who foresee a significant fall in the UK market have not changed their tune. It is difficult to find an equally loud voice saying there will be a big rise. In many cases, 5,000 or below is the prediction for the FTSE by the end of the year, alongside falls on other exchanges around the world.

There is general agreement that investors should now avoid trendy "momentum" stocks that could be hit badly by a downturn and opt for neglected sectors that offer better value.

Prudential, which is the largest investor in the UK stock market, has not changed its view on UK shares. Juan Navarro, who is part of the team that decides where the Prudential invests its billions, said: "We prefer the UK to other stock markets. European markets are much more vulnerable. Since the beginning of the third quarter, the UK has been outperforming other markets, and we think that it will continue to do so."

Neil Woodford, fund manager with Perpetual, said that the moment everyone starts predicting that share prices will fall is the moment to invest. He said: "I think that there will be a

crash, but it will be upwards. The pension fund managers feel bearish because they have for the first time been completely beaten by the passive fund managers. If they are switching into cash and the market is still going up, there is still further value to be had."

Mr. Woodford does not believe that the UK is in a strong bull market. He points out that only companies in the FTSE 100 index, that is the biggest companies, have shown very strong rises. The share prices of the medium-sized or small companies have not moved upwards with such alacrity. Export-led manufacturing companies and those that have large overseas earnings have been hurt by the strength of the pound. With the weakening of sterling, they may now start to bounce back.

Mathew Orr, a partner with Killik & Co, the broker, is also optimistic, and also believes that the smaller companies will now come into their own. Although the FTSE 100 has moved up 27 per cent, some of the companies with less than £1 billion market capitalisation have not moved. Halima and Dorling Kindersley, the publisher, are two such stocks, he claims.

For those UK investors who are nervous about buying into the UK market at these levels, Mr Orr points to UK investment trusts trading at a discount. "The discounts protect investors against a downturn."

Jeremy Baisone, Natwest stockbroker, pointed out that many in the US had been expecting a crash for some time — it had not arrived. "We now have to realise that we are in a new paradigm."

WEEKEND MONEY  
is edited by Anne Ashworth

Nationwide members may have rejected conversion, but the wave of demutualisations in the building society industry is not quite over (Anne Ashworth writes). Birmingham Midshires, a society long tipped as likely to succumb to a predator, is to be taken over by the Royal Bank of Scotland for a price between £605 million and £630 million.

However, the move has not exhausted the expansionist ambitions of the bank which had earlier been disappointed in its hope of acquiring the Nationwide. RBS says that it will be seeking other building society purchases.

Royal Bank still  
on the lookout

Around one million Birmingham Midshires members will benefit from the takeover. Although an average payout of £600 has been mentioned, the exact purchase price for the society will be based on its profits for the 12 months to June 30, 1998.

It appears that the terms of the takeover could resemble the Bristol & West distribution. B&W borrowers and

savers who had been with the society for less than two years did not qualify for cash payments but were given B&W preference shares. Longer-standing savers received cash. It is likely that Birmingham Midshires borrowers and recently joined savers will receive preference shares in RBS. They will be able to sell these via a low-cost dealing service. It is not yet clear whether

savers of longer standing will receive a basic amount or a payment based on the size of their balance. JP Morgan, the merchant bank advising Birmingham Midshires, has favoured the basic distribution arrangement in two of its three building society deals, the conversions of the Alliance & Leicester and Northern Rock.

On the basis of the details that have been disclosed so far, analysts consider that Birmingham Midshires members are getting a fair deal. Borrowers and recently joined savers would, doubtless, prefer to receive RBS ordinary shares, but existing RBS

Continued on page 31, col 3

## Bombs that need defusing

These are nervous times in the financial markets. And that is good news. The more aware investors, traders and the authorities are of the tensions that have built up, the less likely they are to trigger explosions.

The 1987 crash had its origins on the foreign exchanges. Economic and interest rates cycles in America, Europe and Japan were out of kilter. The dollar had fallen steadily for two years after being driven to the heights by a boom linked to high interest rates. A sharp final drop was triggered by American refusal, at the economic summit, to do much about its trade and budget deficits.

The tensions built up this summer seem less extreme. They are still liable to cause volcanic eruptions if continental plates grate harshly against one other. Interest rates are so low in Japan that retired people, who rely much more on cash savings, are suffering badly. Three-month deposits fetch only 0.5 per cent and eight-year government bonds about 2 per cent. That helps Japanese banks to recover their huge losses, but no wonder investment has flowed abroad, mainly into US Treasury bonds. So the yen has fallen from a high of \$2 to 116 to the dollar, no low for comfort. Japan will surely follow IMF advice to raise rates.

The dollar was boosted by speculators from all quarters who expected the long expansion to bring more pre-emptive rises in interest rates or threaten inflation. Neither has happened recently. Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, has changed his mind. Instead of lambasting "irrational exuberance", he now accepts that a US



PERSONAL  
INVESTOR

GRAHAM  
SEARJEANT

productivity miracle just could keep non-inflationary growth going indefinitely. Speculators chasing rising money rates have been replaced by others chasing bond prices. Ten-year money now fetches only 6½ per cent and 30 year money 6½. That looks a decent return to lock in, but not if optimists are wrong and the dollar unwinds.

If there is any major economic imbalance, it will be in continental Europe. Governments have tight fiscal policies to qualify for the euro, stifling recovery and leaving interest rates low. Most will not succeed without cheating but, it seems, will qualify anyway. The European central bank may then feel it needs to defend the new euro against such profligacy and raise interest rates well above today's German levels. Or it may not, allowing the euro to stimulate trade. Or the union may fail.

This makes fertile ground for speculators, especially before decisions on euro membership next spring. Foreigners

buying mark-denominated assets now are taking a double risk. Traders attacked the mark because it will convert into a weaker euro and, later, high and still rising unemployment would not allow the Bundesbank to defend it. So far, the Bundesbank has sidestepped the challenge neatly.

Continental money has flowed into London stocks, embarrassing cautious domestic fund managers. Foreigners felt safe buying sterling. The highest interest rates in any major market were still rising. But blue chip shares were pushed up when the domestic attractions of holding cash were rising by the month, when sterling's strength was hitting profits and when City forecasts of company earnings growth were falling.

Any change in assumptions being made by traders can easily set off a chain reaction. This week the dollar fell gently against the mark but stopped falling against the yen, and US shares and bonds dipped with minimum fuss. Sterling eased and blue chips relapsed a little. The Bank of England astutely coupled news that UK rates are on hold for three months with one last rise. That was encouraging until yesterday's tumble.

Quirky August trading positions are unravelling from the extremes. The danger will not be over for many months, until markets have coped with some reversal of interest rate trends. Those who remember 1987 will also remember that even a crash can be short-lived when economic fundamentals are sound, as they are in Britain.

Woolwich Windfall?

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## Nathan Yates on whether smaller companies trusts are set to make it big Cinderella funds miss the ball

Smaller companies funds are the Cinderellas of the unit and investment trust world. While trusts that buy shares in larger firms are basking in the riches of a record bull market, the smaller companies sector is missing the ball.

Relative to the FTSE 100, the FTSE small cap (capitalisation) index that measures the performance of small firms has

slumped for a third successive year. The record levels achieved this week by the FTSE 100 have not been matched by rises in the share prices of the smaller companies.

Many investors have lost patience with being left behind, withdrawing £11 million from smaller companies unit trusts in July alone, and a dearth of demand for smaller companies investment trusts has sent aver-

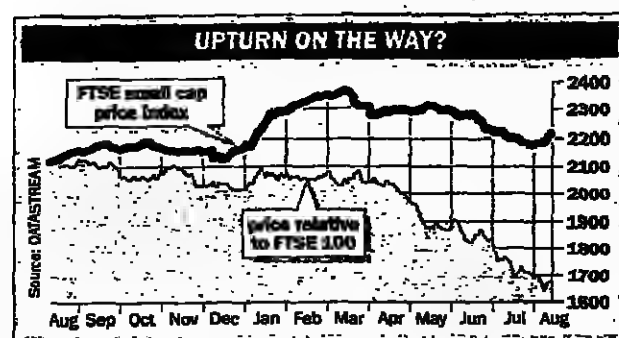
age discounts to asset value soaring at 14 per cent.

But expert opinion is sharply divided on whether now is the time to make an exit. Some analysts claim that smaller companies funds are significantly undervalued, while others say the only way forward for this sector is downwards.

The optimists, such as Andrew Crossley of Invesco, believe that smaller companies offer rare value in a stretched market. "Smaller companies have seen unprecedented underperformance considering we are not in a recession," he said. "But the fundamental story is still that the FTSE 100 is overvalued and the small cap index undervalued. Sooner or later something will trigger a change, and once this happens we will see the gap close quickly."

Mr Crossley says that the gap between smaller and larger companies has been exaggerated by factors such as building society demutualisations, which have drawn extra investment into the big banks. "Smaller companies specialists have just got demoralised, and the result is that small caps are now cheaper than at any time in the past 15 years," he said.

One of the biggest difficul-



ties for smaller firms is the strength of the pound. A strong pound means that British goods are more expensive to buy abroad, so exporters are faced with either squeezing their profits or losing competitiveness. For large multinational companies the problem is less acute because they can offset their UK currency losses against gains in other parts of the world. But for a small British manufacturer, it is difficult to escape the problem.

In addition, rising interest rates create a tough environment for small firms, many of which are forced to rely on borrowing to sustain investment. Higher rates mean higher borrowing costs and lower profits for shareholders.

According to Gervais Williams, of Gartmore, an immi-

nent change in both of these negative factors will trigger a revival for smaller companies. "The amazing divergence between large and small will not last. Interest rates will peak soon and we do not expect them to exceed 8 per cent. Sterling may already be on its way down. Either of these factors could be the turning point."

Support for Mr Williams' view emerged this week with signs that the gap between share prices of larger and smaller companies is closing. Since Monday smaller companies have outperformed blue chips, and this could be the start of a long-awaited change.

However, the smaller companies slump has been so prolonged that some fund man-

agers have given up hope of a significant upturn. With the exception of 1993 the sector has underperformed the FTSE 100 index in every year of this decade. A measure of the effect of this is that HSBC, the UK's biggest stock, is now worth as much as all the constituents of the small companies index put together.

Andrew Jackson of Hill Samuel sees no evidence that the trend will be reversed. "We are cautious on the prospects for smaller companies," he said. "They are far from out of the woods on sterling, and we are expecting widespread revisions in profit forecasts for 1998."

Hill Samuel's cautious stance is consistent with its belief that the UK is on the brink of a downturn. Conventional wisdom dictates that investors retreat into the safety of blue chip stocks during difficult times. This is because smaller firms are usually more vulnerable to the movements of the economy. If you believe that smaller companies funds are about to make a comeback, BEST investment recommends Schroder UK Smaller Companies, Gartmore UK Smaller Companies, Credit Suisse Smaller Companies and Invesco UK Smaller Companies.



Happy ending: but investors in the small companies sector are proving as elusive as Cinderella was after her sharp exit



ANNE ASHWORTH  
Personal Finance  
Editor

## Reservations over Royal wedding

The Royal Bank of Scotland has, at last, satisfied its urge to buy itself a building society. While some in the City may not be impressed with the results of the bank's retail therapy excursion to the West Midlands, Birmingham Midshires members can be reasonably satisfied. They may be less than thrilled with the potential payouts — £600 being a windfall of moderate proportions — but new ownership may mean a better deal for savers and borrowers who have not enjoyed the most favourable treatment.

The Midshires seems to have fallen out of love with mutualism some time ago. While other mutuals are attempting to justify their existence with more generous savers' offers and lower mortgage rates, the Midshires has been behaving more like a bank swift to raise its mortgage rate after a base rate increase but slow to improve rates for savers. As a consequence, the Yorkshire Building Society claims that its borrowers with £50,000 loans paid £254 less last year than their counterparts at the Midshires.

Many Midshires customers have stayed faithful only because the society was seen as a takeover target. The Royal Bank must woo them to ensure that they do not decamp to competitors once they have pocketed their bonuses. The bank cannot afford to be left with only those borrowers with arrears and negative equity who would not be welcomed by other lenders.

Executives at other societies happy to be mutual were indecently pleased by the Midshires news. They believe that the departure of this fainthearted mutual will enhance the image of mutualism and its average rates. Already the gap between the mutuals and the converted societies is becoming more defined. The new loan rates of the Halifax (8.45 per cent) and the Nationwide (8.10 per cent) are but one example. At the new banks, the interest rate margin, the crucial gap between savers' and mortgage rates, is more than 2 per cent. Some mutuals can boast a margin of around 1.50 per cent.

But the societies should beware complacency. It is now rumoured that the Halifax will use some of its plentiful cash to deliver more generous savers' rates. The fun is just beginning.

## Time to tackle Net cheats

THE credit card oils the wheels of modern living. Many who disapprove of the steep rates charged by card companies keep a flexible friend purely to book travel and cinema tickets. In their advertising, Barclaycard and its kin extol this convenience. They do not mention, however, the risks we run when we part with card details over the telephone.

Alec Evans, a reader of the Times, found that his Visa debit card had been used to make purchases over the Internet (see page 31) and was understandably mystified. Although he has sometimes shopped by telephone, he has never surfed the Net. His bank could give no explanation.

Already we pay for cash funds through higher bank charges and interest rates. As the anonymous world of the Internet provides infinite new opportunities for abuse, it seems that we must also be prepared to foot the bill for cyber-theft. Visa is introducing guidelines to encourage retailers to check the identities of Internet cardholders. But few are persuaded that this will solve the problem. Until some technology is devised to combat the Net cheaters, those who order goods over the phone would be wise to check their card statements with more vigour.

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THE TIMES SATURDAY AUGUST 16 1997

# In need of a safety Net

The danger of investing money through the Internet was illustrated last week by the collapse of the European Union Bank, a company based in Antigua that offered high rates of interest to savers.

The failure of the bank, which was owned by two Russians who have disappeared, will leave many wealthy savers round the world out of pocket. They may have been attracted to the bank because it promised customers complete confidentiality — a maxim enshrined in Antigua law. It also offered interest rates that were three times the rates offered by UK banks.

Anyone in the UK who invested through the bank will not be protected by any of the various safety mechanisms that can give savers peace of mind about their cash. For example, when BCCI, the international bank, collapsed in 1991, 16,000 UK-based savers received a total of £78 million in compensation under the terms of the Deposit Protection Scheme — the scheme administered by the Bank of England. They received this because, unlike the European Union Bank, BCCI was authorised by the Bank of England.

For UK regulators, policing financial companies and financial transactions on the Internet presents something of a nightmare. It is very cheap for companies

**Caroline Merrell looks into why purchasing financial products and services by computer can be fraught with danger**

to set up sites and it is a very cost-efficient way of reaching millions of people. Many UK-based financial services companies have spotted the potential of the Internet as a method of selling more of their products without having to provide expensive distribution outlets, such as high street branches or salesmen. For example, Garmore, Fidelity and Mercury all allow consumers to buy unit trusts and Peps through the Internet.

The Securities and Investments Board (SIB), the chief City regulator, pointed out that regulation in this country tended to be focused on the advice given concerning the financial product: where no advice is given and purchases are made on an execution-only basis, then policing schemes becomes much tougher. The SIB pointed out that the Internet allowed consumers to buy stocks and unit trust equivalents from unrecognised markets

such as Russia. Information on the viability or otherwise of stocks is bound to be scarce, and while investing through a Russian broker is safer than it was, investors do not enjoy protection under the Financial Services Act.

Even highly regulated markets like the US should be treated with some trepidation. Last year Bill Gates, head of Microsoft, spearheaded a promotional campaign about Nasdaq, an American market where the shares in some of the world's most highly speculative technology companies are traded. The TV campaign for Nasdaq also carried an Internet address.

The SIB, the Investment Management Regulatory Organisation (Imro) and the Securities and Futures Association (SFA) all have sites on the Internet, giving investors guidelines on putting money through Internet-advised financial companies. An SIB spokesman said: "One of the most important things to do is to make sure that the company is authorised, which can be checked through the SIB central register. If an investment looks too good to be true, then it probably is." He refused to say how many investigations are currently being conducted on companies on the Internet. He added that it received many of its tip-offs from those surfing the Net.

## Worried by use of number

Visa, the credit card network, says that the Internet is not a safe place for financial transactions. One reader of *The Times* was pushed hundreds of pounds into debt through Internet fraud on his Abbey National Visa debit card.

Alec Evans, 80, does not own a computer, so he was baffled when he received a letter from the Abbey National claiming that he was overdrawn. He said: "A visit to the local branch disclosed that five unauthorised debits had been made." The five withdrawals were related to three different companies on the Internet. Later, another two withdrawals were made.

The amount taken, in US dollars, amounts to more than £200. Abbey National immediately refunded Mr Evans. He said that he had never made a purchase over the Internet — he does not even own a computer. Abbey National was not able to supply an adequate explanation for the misuse of its customer's card number. An Abbey spokeswoman said: "It is unclear how this happened. He could have been overheard giving out his number, or his details could have fallen into the wrong hands."



Mystery debits: Alec Evans does not even own a computer

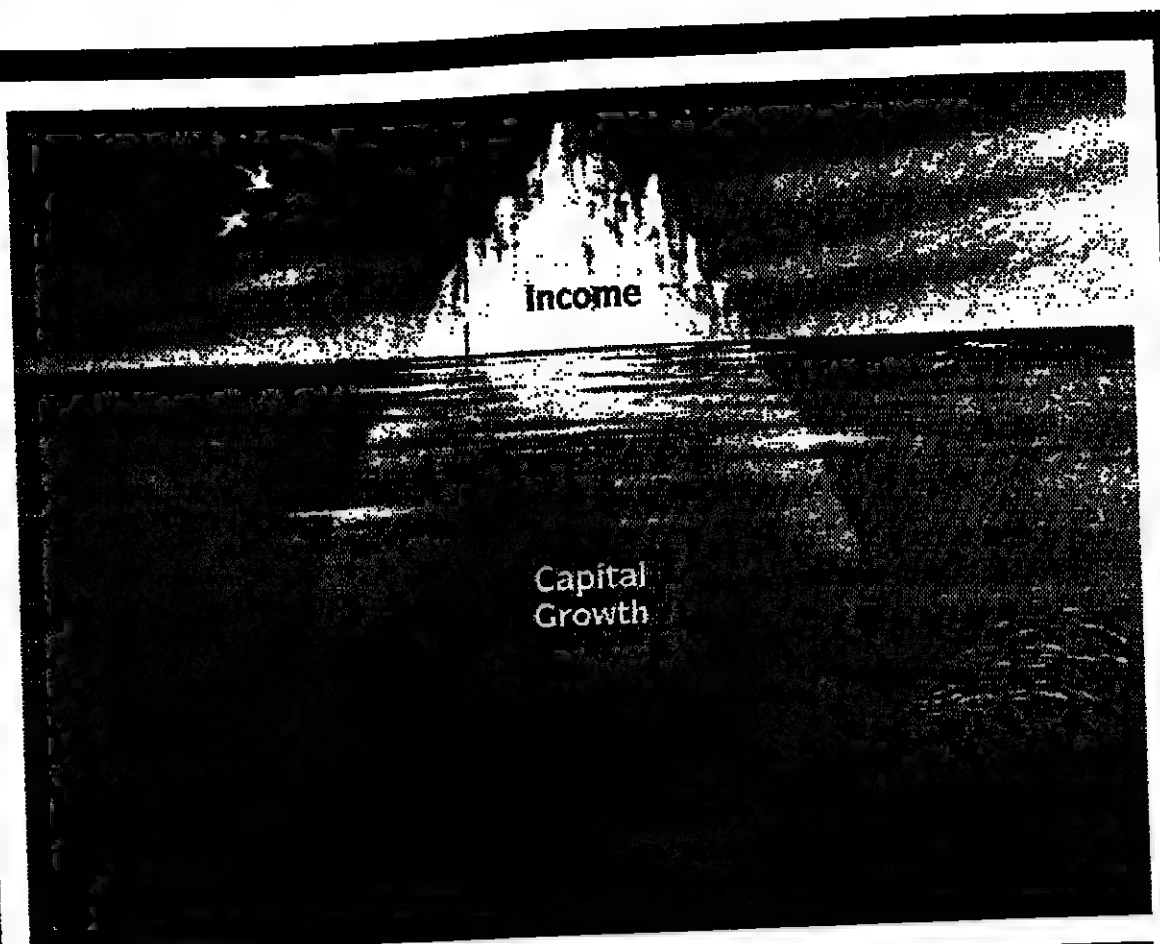
## RBS still on the lookout

Continued from page 29  
shareholders would not have welcomed this dilution of their holdings.

However, many in the City do not believe that RBS has found itself a good buy, because some of the loans acquired by Birmingham Midshires in its multiple purchases of other lenders' mortgage books may not be of the highest quality.

Recently, Birmingham Midshires has preferred to expand by acquiring loan books, rather than selling more of its own mortgages. Over a three-year period, it has had no organic growth.

One analyst also doubted whether RBS will be able to attract other societies to join its organisation. Under the terms of the takeover, the Birmingham Midshires will retain its own brand, product range and head office for three years. But it is likely that other societies would be required to lose their identities immediately. The analyst said: "If there are other societies queuing up to demutualise, then they are not looking for that sort of partner."



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\*Source: Mirostat. Based on the selling price on 1st August 1997. Five year figures: capital growth, £19,378; income received, £2,841. The value of investments may fluctuate and is not guaranteed. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. 2% discount on the buying price of units for lump sum investments in the Mercury 1997/98 PEP. The tax treatment of PEPs may be changed under future legislation. The Mercury Income Fund is managed by Mercury Fund Managers Ltd (regulated by IMRO) and the Personal Investment Authority (PIA). The Mercury Asset Management plc. The Mercury PEPs are managed by Mercury Asset Management plc (regulated by IMRO). Issued by Mercury Investment Services Ltd, 33 King William Street, London EC4R 3AS, which is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and represents only the Mercury Marketing Group and its packaged products which include unit trusts, PEPs and pensions. For your protection, telephone calls are usually recorded.

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65	£79.19	£107.71	£582.24
70	£96.37	£129.72	£1,000.20
75	£117.28	£248.14	£1,570.32

Figures for joining age 50 are current rates. All other ages are based on current rates and assume a 4% annual subscription increase every year for both plans.

If you are under 80 years of age please telephone 01392 477210, fax 01392 477235 or complete this coupon for details.

Mr/Ms/Ms \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
Tel: \_\_\_\_\_  
Current insurer \_\_\_\_\_  
Renewal date \_\_\_\_\_  
Age of people to be included \_\_\_\_\_

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AF10

Gross rate shown is the annual contractual rate of interest payable not taking account of the deduction of income tax at the basic rate. Investors will be paid net of basic rate of income tax (which may be reclaimed by non-tax payers) OR, subject to the required certification, gross. If the balance falls below £500 a variable rate (currently 2% gross, 1.5% net) will apply. All rates shown are compounded annual rate (CAR). CAR is equivalent to the rate annualised to take account of the compounding of interest paid other than once a year.



# Schroders

هتو امان

**Property boom: the power and drive of Toronto's estate agents help to make buying and selling quick and painless**

up the details of all suitable properties. If you see a "For Sale" sign in front of a house you like the look of, your agent will find out all the necessary information and arrange a viewing.

Agents may earn commission from the seller, but they work hard for the buyer. Joanna showed us 20 houses

Canadian real estate agents have certain advantages over

Estate agents also have access to the Multiple Listing Services (MLS), a database of almost all the properties on the market. Agents like exclusive property listings because they get more commission. However, if the property does not sell quickly they put it on the MLS where every agent in the country has access to it.

Agents may earn commission from the seller, but they work hard for the buyer. Joanna showed us 20 houses

happened, we would have lost the survey fee only. If we pulled out after a satisfactory survey we would have lost our deposit.

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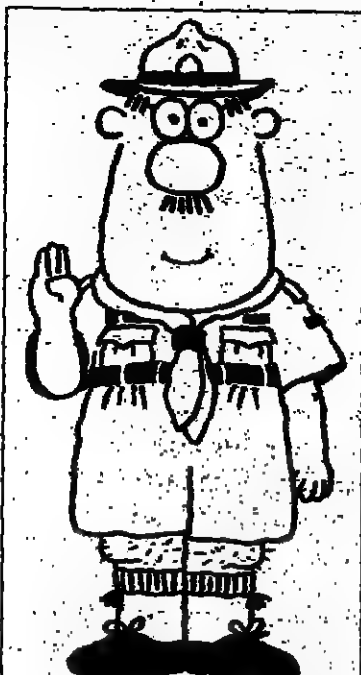
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Give you a safe  
your current p  
364 days a year



## Revenue poised for investigations

An estimated 7,500 taxpayers have already been selected at random to have their tax affairs investigated under the new self-assessment regime, the Inland Revenue revealed this week. They may be among the 5.5 million people who have not yet filed their 1996-97 return, but their names are held



Be prepared for Hector's inquiries

"under lock and key" at local tax offices.

If you are one of the eight million people who have to fill in a tax return, you have a one in 1,000 chance of being randomly picked. If you are self-employed you will then be subjected to a full inquiry, with your books and records scrutinised.

However, if you are an employee whose main income is taxed at source or your tax affairs are simple, you may never even know your name came up because the Revenue already has most of the information it needs to check your return.

The Revenue justifies random checking of returns on the grounds that it will instil fear of detection into tax dodgers and will help tax officials to assess the effectiveness of their assessment of high-risk returns. It has rejected calls to tell taxpayers if their names came up, arguing that it wants to maintain "the neutral, fact-finding and non-confrontational approach we would like to see in inquiry work".

A further 40,000 to 50,000 taxpayers will find their completed returns subject to inquiries by the taxman. Some of these people may also be on the random list. Returns will be chosen according to the risk the Revenue thinks it runs that they are incomplete or incorrect. Under self-assessment, the Revenue has new powers to make further inquiries about any tax return. Inspectors will not wait until the final deadline of the

end of January 1998 to start inquiries, and 200 have already started. There are two types of inquiry, full and aspect. A full inquiry means all your books and records will be gone through and your whole tax return scrutinised. An aspect inquiry will concentrate on certain parts of the return, such as personal pension relief or capital gains tax calculations. But you could face a full inquiry if the aspect inquiry throws up other discrepancies.

Most self-employed people and businesses can expect full inquiries, while those with simpler affairs can probably expect an aspect enquiry.

Bernadette Hurcombe, of the Revenue's self-assessment compliance division, said: "Not all inquiries will be deep and searching. Some are simple and easy to resolve and they could result in repayment to the taxpayer."

Taxpayers have to be given formal notice of an inquiry, which can start at any time until January 1999.

The Revenue attacked as "myth" suggestions that those who filed their returns early were more likely to face an inquiry. It argued that it would not make sense to discourage people from filing early, which helps to spread the processing workload. Those who file early are also more likely to have simpler tax affairs.

To date, the Revenue has received back 2.5 million of the eight million returns it has sent out, 700,000 more than expected at this stage. Of these it has processed 1.7 million. But an

estimated 6 per cent of these are wrong and have to be returned. In some cases, this has been because the taxpayer has forgotten to sign the return, in others because the Revenue cannot correct the numbers without more information.

SARA MCCONNELL



Ensure you are not caught napping

## Get away from it all with offshore portfolio package

Jill Insley sizes up an attempt by Scottish Life to avoid the stress of self-assessment

Most right-minded people who have to fill in a tax return regard self-assessment as a pain. At best it will take up valuable hours to fill in the simplest return; at worst, it will fill whole weekends with aggravation and suffering before the taxpayer gives in and hands over invoices, bills and income records to an accountant.

But is the situation so bad that it warrants moving your investment portfolio offshore? Scottish Life International thinks so. The company says that maintaining accurate income records and tracking gains for every investment within an actively managed portfolio of unit trusts and investment funds could now be "an unbecomingly and administrative burden for many UK investors". Those who fail to keep adequate documents could face fines of up to £3,000 per missing item.

Scottish Life International claims that its new offshore investment bond, the Self Investment Portfolio, can save investors from all this stress. The bond itself is not an investment. Instead, it acts as a "wrapper" for the funds the investor chooses from a list of more than 100 approved management groups.

From these, Scottish Life International has nominated ten firms as "elite" investment managers with whom it has negotiated discounts off the normal fund charges. Unsus-

prisingly, these include Scottish Life and Kleinwort Benson, the company's backers.

Like all investment bonds, the Self Investment Portfolio is classed as a non-income producing asset by the Inland Revenue. This means it does not have to be entered on an investor's self-assessment tax return, unless the investor takes an income of more than 5 per cent of the initial investment in any tax year or cashes in the entire bond.

To ensure that investors can withdraw small tranches of money easily, the bond can be split into a maximum of 100 different policies, each with a minimum value of £2,500.

The bond is based offshore in the Isle of Man and offers the further advantage of allowing investors' money to grow tax-free.

Although the gains derived from offshore bonds are liable to tax once they are realised and brought into the UK, Scottish Life International says medium to long-term investors are likely to find offshore bonds more tax-efficient.

However, any advantage that UK resident investors gain is likely to be wiped out as soon as they start paying the bond's charges. The 8 per cent set-up charge is high compared with the average 5 per cent initial charge for UK-based unit trusts. The company also makes £300 annual policy fee (linked to the Isle of Man RPI) and a 0.25 per cent annual management charge. Someone investing the minimum



Paradise lost: the charges make Scottish Life's offshore investment bond less than idyllic

£50,000 would pay £5,625 in charges over the first five years, even before taking the underlying fund charges into account.

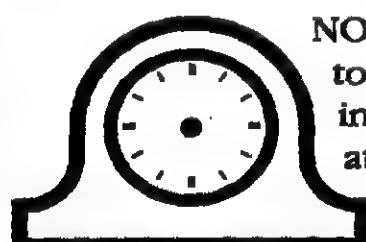
In comparison, Clark Whitehill, the chartered accountants, estimates that it would charge about £400 a year (or £2,000 over five years) to organise the tax return for a £50,000 investment portfolio.

Ian Millward, of Chase de Vere Investments, says: "It's no more expensive than other offshore companies. The whole offshore industry oper-

ates this way, and it's a pretty shoddy way of doing it."

John Edwards, of Berry Birch & Noble, adds that offshore companies tend to make all kinds of additional charges. Mr Edwards reckons that clients who are resident in the UK should stick to onshore-based investments. He says: "If you have got £50,000, you can probably buy something better."

Score: ★★ Products graded from ★ (poor), to ★★★★★ (outstanding).



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# Fidelity to accept last-minute Peps

Fidelity Investments is extending its opening hours until midnight to accept last-minute Woolwich Pep applications. Fidelity will accept, at no charge, Woolwich Pension Shares into its Novus Windfall Pep, a general Pep which offers investors the option to retain, exchange or sell shares. Share certificates from the 10,000 Woolwich customers who have yet to receive their certificates will also be accepted as long as the certificates clearly identify the shares as being free. Call 0800 414171.

If you are approaching retirement age or are already retired, a new book written by Rosemary Brown could prove useful. In addition to highlighting the variety of opportunities available — from leisure activities to voluntary work — *Your Retirement — How to Make the Most of It* includes comprehensive advice on tax planning, pensions, investment and money-saving ideas, social security benefits and wills. It is published by Kogan Page on August 20, priced £8.99.

The end of the summer holidays sees a 50 per cent increase in the number of people visiting a family solicitor.

However, many people have no idea how to choose a legal firm. Around 15,000 solicitors regularly undertake family law cases, but only 20 per cent of these are specialists in the area, according to the Solicitors Family Law Association. The association has published a leaflet to help people thinking of divorce to choose the right solicitor. For the location of your nearest SFLA or for a copy of the leaflet, call 0345 585671.

Towry Law, the independent financial adviser, has produced a free guide to investment risk. *Some Principles of Investing* explains the fundamentals of risk and also shows the different levels of risk available and the types of investment product which cater for each risk level. Call 0345 899933.

A convenient alternative to traveller's cheques has arrived with the launch of Visa TravelMoney. This electronic traveller's cheque can be pre-loaded with holiday money and withdrawals can be made from the 341,000 cash machines in 112 countries. The card is available from Thomas Cook by calling 01733 318900.

LIZANNE ROSE

## GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

### ANNUAL INCOME

Rates as at August 14, 1997

Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)
1 Year		
1,000	Hambro Assured	5.00
5,000	GE Fin Assur	6.20
10,000	GE Fin Assur	6.80*
2 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	6.70
5,000	Hambro Assured	6.50
10,000	Hambro Assured	6.60
20,000	Hambro Assured	6.70
50,000	Hambro Assured	6.70
3 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	6.80
5,000	ITT London & Ed	6.30
10,000	Hambro Assured	6.70
20,000	Hambro Assured	6.70
50,000	Hambro Assured	6.75
4 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	6.30
5,000	ITT London & Ed	6.35
10,000	Hambro Assured	6.75
20,000	Hambro Assured	6.75
50,000	Hambro Assured	6.75
5 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	6.25
5,000	ITT London & Ed	6.75
10,000	Hambro Assured	6.75
20,000	Hambro Assured	6.75
50,000	Hambro Assured	6.75

Sources: Chamberlain & Dick (0171) 434 4222. Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Entry restricted. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available. \* Limited edition.

## SAVERS' BEST BUYS

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNTS				
Clydesdale Bank 0800 445265	Savings	Instant	£25	6.50
C&G Bank w.e.f. 1.9.97/0800 742437	Inst Transfer	Inst b	£1,000	7.00
Legal & General Bank 0500 111200	Direct Cash	Postal	£10,000	7.00
Alliance & Leicester 0845 608860	Direct Cash	Postal	£10,000	7.25

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS				
Scottish Widows Bank 0345 829829	60 Day Notice	60 day p	£500	6.50
Leopold Joseph 0171 5882323	40 Day Notice	40 day p	£10,000	7.10
Northern Rock BS 0500 505000	Select 60	90 day p	£10,000	7.55
Northern Rock BS 0500 505000	Select 90	90 day p	£25,000	7.65

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
FIRST TESSAS (TAX FREE)				
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505	Fixed-rate a/c	5 year	£8,575	7.55
Investec Bank (UK) 0171 203 1650	Premier+Header	5 year	£3,000	7.55
Melton Mowbray BS 01664 63937	5 year	5 year	£2,500	7.45
Principality BS 01222 344188	5 year	5 year	£2,500	7.45

## CREDIT CARDS BEST BUYS

Card type	Interest per month	APR%	Fee per annum
CREDIT CARDS			
Capital One Bank 0800 699000	0.64%N	7.90%N	NIL
RBS Advantage 0800 777770	0.75%N	9.00%N	NIL
Co-operative Bank 0800 109000	0.87%N	10.50%N	NIL

## PERSONAL LOANS BEST BUYS

PERSONAL LOANS	APR	Monthly payment on £5,000 for 3yrs with insurance	Monthly payment on £5,000 for 3yrs no insurance
Direct Line 0161 680 9866	12.80%N	£183.75	£168.38
Hamilton Direct Bank 0800 303000	12.90%N	£189.98	£166.65
Alliance & Leic Grp 0990 626262	13.30%N	£187.73	£167.56

Nb. A = Minimum age 22 years. Holders of comprehensive motor insurance policy or lender's existing customers. B = Withdrawals via Bank Clearing System. C = No interest free period. F = Fixed Rate (all other rates variable). N = introductory rate for a limited period. P = By Post only. \* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE. PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING.

Sources: Moneyfacts. The Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (1992-97) 0777

## PIBS

Gross coupon	Buying price	% Gross yield	Minimum purchase amount
FIXED RATE			
Birmingham Midshires 9.375%	118.81	7.865	100.17
Bradford & Bingley 11.625%	143.15	8.121	100.13
Bradford & Bingley 13.000%	158.99	8.128	100.20
Britannia 13.000%	158.21	8.186	100.42
Coventry 12.125%	163.44	7.844	100.75
First National 11.750%	142.69	8.240	100.25
Lloyds & Holbeck 13.375%	165.19	8.057	100.23
Newcastle 10.750%	131.09	8.116	100.32
Newcastle 12.625%	155.39	8.125	100.45
Northern Rock 12.625%	154.64	8.164	100.14
Skipston 12.875%	158.04	8.066	100.48

## FLOATING RATE

Gross coupon	Buying price	% Gross yield	Minimum purchase amount
Cheshire (30/09/27/03) 9.04063%	117.00	100.00	1,000
First Nat (22/09/20/03) 9.12081%	104.00	100.00	1,000

PIBS = Permanent Interest Bearing Shares. Source: A&L AMRO House (0171) 601 0101

## SHARES IN FOCUS: GAMES WORKSHOP

SHARES RISE ON BROKER BUY RECOMMENDATION



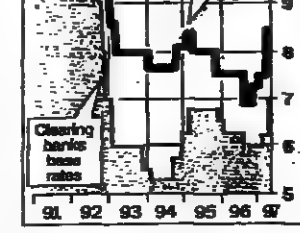
Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug

## BASE RATES V MORTGAGES



Source: Bank of England

## FTSE 100 PRICE INDEX



Source: FTSE

## LARGER LENDERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
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Building Societies

Cheltenham & Gloucester

0800 291291

Northern Rock

0800 591500

Bradford & Bingley

0800 570800

Bank of Ireland

01189 510100

Abbey National

0800 555100

Halifax plc

01422 333333

Bank of Scotland

01189 510100

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01422 333333

## NATIONAL SAVINGS

	Gross rate	At tax rates		Minimum investment	Notice	Contact	
		20%	40%				
Ordinary A/c	1.50	1.20	0.90	10-10,000**		0645 6450	
Investment A/c*	4.75	3.80	2.85	20-500**†‡	1mth	0645 6450	
Income Bond*	6.00	4.80	3,602.00-25,000**		3mth	0645 6450	
First City Bonds	6.25	5.00	3,751.00-100,000**			0645 6450	
4th Issue Bonds	6.35			100,000	1mth	0645 6450	
Children's Bonds	6.75			3.99	100-250,000	1mth	0645 6450
Capital Bonds	6.85			3.99	100-250,000	1mth	0645 6450
11th Ind Link	6.85			3.99	100-250,000	1mth	0645 6450
Parents Bonds	7.00			4.20	500-50,000	60day	0645 6450

\* First £10 (£140) of net tax free, rest rates for up to £100. \*\* Unlimited additional funds for investment. \* For tax free. \* Rates gross and net. \* Guaranteed when held for 5 years. \* 40% net bonus for £10,000+ (£10,000) in addition to 51 and 52 holdings. \* Flexible but used in full. \* 1990-100,000 min higher rates. \* \* Rates net apply.

## PENSION ANNUITIES

All figures are the gross annual annuity (£100,000 purchase), guaranteed 5 years, paid monthly in advance

SINGLE LIFE (level ann.) Male: Age 60 Age 65 Age 70

Norwich Un Level £9,468 £10,476 £11,816

Equitable Un Level £9,534 £10,482 £11,875

Royal Sun All Level £9,248 £10,398 £11,851

Sun Life Level £9,207 £10,327 £11,840

Standard Life Level £9,224 £10,316 £11,732

SINGLE LIFE Female: Age 60 Age 65 Age 70

Prudential Level £8,885 £9,875 £11,080

Canada Life Level £8,800 £9,814 £10,804

Generall Level £8,624 £9,547 £10,816

Norwich Un Level £8,750 £9,513 £10,864

Royal Sun All Level £8,509 £9,395 £10,612

JOINT LIFE 2/3 WIDOWS Male: Age 60 Age 65 Age 70

(level annuity) Female: Age 55 Age 60 Age 65

Norwich Un Level £8,587 £9,087 £9,781

Canada Life Level £8,370 £8,904 £9,578

Prudential Level £8,388 £8,921 £9,743

Equitable Un Level £8,277 £8,813 £9,547

Allied Dunbar Level £8,259 £8,803 £9,552

Sources: Annuity Direct (0171) 585 8383

Statistics compiled by Lizanne Rose

## FIRST TIME BUYERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
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Building Societies

Newbury

01635 43678

Chesham

0800 243278

Coventry

01203 555255

Bank of Ireland

01189 510100

Halifax plc

01422 333333

Bank of Scotland

01189 510100

Halifax plc

01422 333333

Bank of Ireland

01189 510100

Abbey National

0800 555100







THE TIMES SATURDAY AUGUST 16 1997

1. **CONCRETE REINFORCEMENTS**  
 2. **STEELS**  
 3. **WELDED REINFORCEMENTS**  
 4. **CONCRETE PILES & PIER**  
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## Equities take a tumble

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

High Low Change % P/E

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

BANKS

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

BREWERY, PUBS & REST

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

BUILDING & CONSTRUCT

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

ELECTRICITY

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

ELECTRONIC & ELECT

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

ENGINEERING

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

CHEMICALS

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

DISTRIBUTORS

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

High Low Change % P/E

ENGINEERING VEHICLES

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

LEISURE & HOTELS

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

MINING

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

PROPERTY

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

TEXTILES & APPAREL

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

TRANSPORT

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

RETAILERS, FOOD

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

RETAILERS, GENERAL

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

WATER

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

High	Low	Change	%	P/E
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2
100	98	-2	-2.0	15.2

Source: Financial Times

Price of a share in the FTSE 100 index is 100.00

Price of a share in the FTSE 100 index is 100.00

Price of a share in the FTSE 100 index is 100.00

Price of a share in the FTSE 100 index is 100.00

Price of a share in the FTSE 100 index is 100.00







## RACING: MILE CONTEST DRAWS COMPETITIVE FIELD TO NORMANDY TRACK

## Starborough seeks straight answer

By OUR FRENCH RACING CORRESPONDENT

STARBOROUGH attempts to record only the second British victory in the last 13 runnings of the Prix du Haras de Fresnay-le-Buffard Jacques Le Marois over the straight mile at Deauville tomorrow. The David Loder-trained colt, to be ridden by Frankie Dettori, already has two group one races to his name, the Prix Jean Prat at Chantilly in May and the St James's Palace Stakes at Royal Ascot.

Loder blamed the sharp track when Starborough was beaten into second by All-Royal in the Sussex Stakes at Goodwood, and the fear remains that a mile may be on the short side for him.

Daylami and Zamindar, two of the principal French hopes, have been beaten by Starborough in Britain this season, but now enjoy home advantage. Daylami was an impressive winner of the Dubai Poule d'Essai des Poulains — the French 2,000 Guineas — at Longchamp in May before finishing five lengths third in the St James's Palace.

Zamindar has failed to live up to the expectations of his trainer, André Fabre, this season. Fifth, three-quarters of a length behind Starborough, in the 2,000 Guineas at Newmarket, he was beaten three-quarters of a length by Monasib when dropped to

six furlongs in the Prix de Ris-Orangis last time.

Spinning World attempts to follow up his victory in this race 12 months ago and will have the benefit of a pacemaker. Pipert, whose presence could unsettle the front-running Starborough, Spinning World made a winning reappearance but has not run since finishing a distant fourth to First Island in the Lockinge Stakes at Newbury. Owned by the race sponsors, the Niarcho family, the son of Nureyev has been prepared with this event in mind.

The line-up is completed by another Fabre representative, Neully. He sprang a 20-1 surprise over this course and distance last month in the group three Prix Messidor but needs to continue his rapid improvement to be a factor. Lord Of Men is the only British challenger in a field of five for the group three Prix Gontaut-Biron over ten furlongs at Deauville today. John Gosden has booked Sylvain Guillot to ride Northern Ledge Dane, second in the 1995 Melbourne Cup, makes his European debut in the race.



Starborough carries British hopes at Deauville tomorrow

GOING: GOOD

DRAW: NO ADVANTAGE

## 2.35 PRX DU HARAS DE FRESNAY-LE-BUFFARD JACQUES LE MAROIS (Group 1; 1m 5f; 6 runners)

1. 0122-34 SPINNING WORLD (Dettori) 5-11-5. 2. 0122-34 SPINNING WORLD (Dettori) 5-11-5. 3. 0122-34 SPINNING WORLD (Dettori) 5-11-5. 4. 0122-34 SPINNING WORLD (Dettori) 5-11-5. 5. 0122-34 SPINNING WORLD (Dettori) 5-11-5. 6. 0122-34 SPINNING WORLD (Dettori) 5-11-5.

Newbury

Going: good to firm  
2.10 (6) 5-11-5. 2.10 (6) 5-11-5. 2.10 (6) 5-11-5. 2.10 (6) 5-11-5. 2.10 (6) 5-11-5. 2.10 (6) 5-11-5.

Brighton

Going: good to firm  
2.00 (6) 5-11-5. 2.00 (6) 5-11-5. 2.00 (6) 5-11-5. 2.00 (6) 5-11-5. 2.00 (6) 5-11-5. 2.00 (6) 5-11-5.

## FORTHCOMING COMPANY GOLF DAYS

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Date	Company name	Address	Phone
15 AUG	ALEXANDER & PARTNERS	KINGS ACRES	24
16 AUG	WATSON & CO	KINGS ACRES	24
17 AUG	BOY & LLOYD OFFICE SUPPLIES LTD	TRACY PARK	38
18 AUG	CITY FINANCIAL	MEDWAY ROAD	24
19 AUG	FINANCIAL LTD	MEDWAY ROAD	24
20 AUG	DERRY LANDSCAPE & GARDEN DESIGN	FOREST PARK	42
21 AUG	EPSON MEDICAL SERVICES	WATFORD ROAD	18
22 AUG	M H & S	DALMANOY	128
23 AUG	NAT WEST BANK	PALFORD ROAD	28
24 AUG	ROYAL MAIL	BLUE MOUNTAIN	38
25 AUG	ADRIAN INSURANCE	SHIVERS	40
26 AUG	BARTWELL ENTERPRISES	MURRAYSHALL	40
27 AUG	GOFFERS & TYRRELL	SHIVERS	40
28 AUG	FRANKLIN WILLIAMS & FRANKLIN	HANBURY MANOR	40
29 AUG	DANIEL SMITH	COPTHORPE	38
30 AUG	EMILE STAR LIFE ASSURANCE CO LTD	LADYBANK	38
31 AUG	MARKS & SPENCER PLC	DEERHALL	40
1 SEP	PERLAS	BURNLEY	38
2 SEP	PROFESSIONAL SYSTEMS PERSONNEL LTD	WATFORD ROAD	24
3 SEP	APOLLO HOME ENTERTAINMENT	ST BEINER HILL	38
4 SEP	BURY & WALKERS	WATFORD ROAD	24
5 SEP	CO-OPERATIVE INSURANCE SOCIETY	WATFORD ROAD	24
6 SEP	LOGICOM LTD	EMERY WORTHON	24
7 SEP	BARCLAYCARD	STAVERTON PARK	38
8 SEP	CHASS COMMUNICATIONS	CHARTER HILL	38
9 SEP	PARK WELDON	SUNNINGDALE	40
10 SEP	ABLE INSTRUMENTS & CONTROLS LTD	LEHMAN ROAD	38
11 SEP	CEC WIRAN	BOLTON OLD LIME	180
12 SEP	DEVONPORT MANAGEMENT LIMITED	CHINA FERRY	38
13 SEP	MIDLANDS & BELLSHILL HOSPITALS NHS TRUST	AIRPORT	38
14 SEP	NORTHERN GLASS	CARDEN PARK	24
15 SEP	POWER TESTING LIMITED	THE WARREN	38
16 SEP	SOMER MEDICAL	LYNHAM	34
17 SEP	TOLFOUR POLICE GOLF SOCIETY	LILLESALL HALL	104
18 SEP	THE ST JAMES PARTNERSHIP	LIMBARD HAY	40

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1 TELEPHONE 0171 405 7273  
2 FAXBACK ON 0660 600667  
3 ACCESS THE INTERNET SITE ON  
http://www.golfingtoday.co.uk/timescorp/

## ESTERDAY'S RESULTS

2.30 (7) 2-14-1. 2.30 (7) 2-14-1. 2.30 (7) 2-14-1. 2.30 (7) 2-14-1. 2.30 (7) 2-14-1. 2.30 (7) 2-14-1.

## NAP: MIHNAH

(24 Ripon)

Next best: Shantou

(3.00 Newbury)

Thunder gave six of the seven winners at Newbury yesterday, including Almasi (5-11-5) and Lord Of Men (5-11-5). The winner was topped by The Times Handicap (General Hubbard).

3.00 (6) 2-14-1. 3.00 (6) 2-14-1. 3.00 (6) 2-14-1. 3.00 (6) 2-14-1. 3.00 (6) 2-14-1. 3.00 (6) 2-14-1.

Brighton

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## WOLVERHAMPTON

7.00 Guaranteed. 7.30 Phoenix Princess. 8.00 Talitha Belle. 8.30 Only For Gold. 9.00 Juicy Ting. 9.30 Brynkr.

GOING: STANDARD DRAW: NO ADVANTAGE SIS

## 7.00 E F STARFISH MAIDEN



Crippled former world champion returns at helm of his own 500cc grand prix motorcycle team

# Rainey battles demons within

The motorcycle was on the edge of adhesion, the verge of disaster. Wayne Rainey could feel it twitching beneath him as he opened the throttle through his favourite left-hand corner. He heard his own heartbeat, detected a delicious dryness in his throat. He saw everything in slow motion. His brain told him he was in control, but his body reminded him he was in a wheelchair. He had been ambushed by his imagination. They eventually found him beside the deserted track, weeping quietly.

Rainey will confront the demons once again this weekend as manager of his own 500cc team at the British Grand Prix at Donington Park. The referred pain he still endures, nearly four years after the accident that snapped his spine, is merely the physical manifestation of the phantoms of his past.

He has become inured to the indignities of denial and depression, but his last flashback, at Phillip Island in Australia earlier in the year, surprised him. "I thought I'd grown out of it, but it all came back to me, suddenly," he explained. "Trying to tame a 500cc bike is a bizarre experience, one like no other, and emotionally I was back on one that afternoon. I was actually watching Mick Doohan, but I'd convinced myself it was me in his place. I tell you, being able to block out the things that made me happy in my so-called first life is a great gift."

There is a suitably wistful tone to his voice, because he has undergone the catharsis of writing an unflinchingly honest autobiography, which is being launched at the Derbyshire circuit tonight. His soothing Californian accent belies the contradictions of his inner struggle. His eyes are alive, but heavily lined. His hands are expressive, but sore and cracked because of the side-effects of drugs taken to control involuntary body spasms.

Rainey was reborn at 1.29pm at Misano in Italy on September 5, 1993, when he was paralysed during a gruesome *pas de deux* with his Yamaha across a ribbed, gravel trap. In that fateful instant, his focus changed from the pursuit

MICHAEL CALVIN



of a fourth successive world championship to the painful luxury of sucking oxygen into lungs that leaked blood. He was determined not to die.

"Hey, I was on the gas. I was in the lead," he told the world from his hospital bed, through his wife, Shae. "What could be a better way to go out?" He persuaded her to forge his handwriting and fax the team for qualifying times. He would return, like a leather-clad McArthur. He would build a better life for himself. It is only now that he can smile ruefully

at the memory of such naivety. "At the beginning, I thought I was fooling everyone," he said. "The only person I was fooling was myself."

"You learn most in the deepest valleys. I was consumed by racing and, when I first got hurt, all I could think about was what I could not do. Now I'm more fulfilled. I know what I can do. I've learned through being disabled that it is possible to be a better person. I take as much as I can from each day. There are a lot of kids out there, who get hurt through no fault of their own. They need people like me, who can tell them it is OK to be in a wheelchair. Life does go on."

He was a watchword for perfection in his sport. He was its dominant figure, an intense character who found speed an intellectual challenge. The parallels with Ayrton Senna, who was one of the first to contact him in hospital, were uncanny. Each was apparently insulated by unprecedented



Rainey, once the racer supreme, holds court from his wheelchair as he and his team prepare to challenge for the British 500cc Grand Prix at Donington Park

excellence. The impact of Rainey's accident on the motorcycle community was identical to that of Senna's death on the Formula One circuit eight months later. The unthinkable had occurred, live, on Sunday afternoon television.

"I always knew it could happen to me," Rainey insisted. "Every rider thinks about it. The moment he falls off his bike and he's sliding along the ground, he's thinking about living. Safety is a No 1 concern, but if you want to win, you must put yourself in a position of risk. As my career went on, I was cornered. I didn't want second place, but I didn't want to hurt myself. There's not a lot of room for compromise."

Motorcycling is notorious for devouring its own. Veteran riders have the world-weary air of gun-fighters who fear they have defied fate once too often. Doohan, the present world champion, walks with a pronounced limp, the legacy of an accident that almost resulted in the amputation of his right leg. He has minimal movement in his right ankle and is resigned to being crippled with arthritis in middle age. He is a

multimillionaire who has nothing to prove, yet is considering joining forces with Rainey next year.

Rainey understands a rider's obsessional nature better than most. "I've lost friends through racing, but people enjoy the thrill of pushing themselves to the limit," he rationalised. "I loved the unknown, the feeling of being on the edge. It's where you feel free, where you're happy and most confident. If you're not there, it is like walking with a crutch. It just doesn't feel right."

"You don't want to be at the point where you're almost crashing, but, without realising it, you're there all the time. There comes a moment where you're out of your seat and throwing it all away. That's when you realise what's going on. It's strange, but sometimes when you hit the ground you know you're going to be okay. At Misano, I hit the ground and felt nothing."

His instincts have survived incarceration in his wheelchair. The Formula One team owner, Frank Williams, has been a constant source of psychological support, urging him to "think about your

body all the time". His former rival, Eddie Lawson, has built him a hand-controlled 150mph go-kart and he has just taken delivery of a 70mph jet boat. Speed remains a tangible expression of individuality, the hidden casualty of paralysis.

"People always say, don't look at the chair, look at the person," Rainey reflected, "but I know that when people walk up to me, they see it, rather than me. I accept there's nothing I can do about that. I've almost forgotten to be self-conscious. Sure, I miss my legs — there are times I get mad that I'm in this chair — but I realise there is no place to hide."

Except, perhaps, in the labyrinth of his imagination. It doesn't take much stimulation. "I had an out-of-body experience once," he said. "Suzuka, 1993. I was coming out of a corner and the bike was real loose, sliding sideways. I felt I was intimidating everyone. I was giggling and laughing and for about two-tenths of a second I was actually looking down on myself..." He paused, and smiled self-consciously. It was evidently time to return to the real world.



Doohan, who enjoys the high profile granted to the reigning world champion, is considering joining Rainey next year

## CYCLING

### Sciandri in form for World Cup

By Peter Bryan

TOMORROW could prove a day of revenge for Max Sciandri, of Great Britain, who was outmanoeuvred last year by Andrea Ferrigato, of Italy, in a two-man sprint for the line at the end of the Leeds round of the road race World Cup.

Both return for the Rochester International Classic, the seventh round of this year's ten-race series, which makes a 150-mile loop of Kent, taking in the Romney Marshes. Sciandri has been the country's most successful rider in the United Kingdom rounds of the World Cup series, winning in 1995. After a disappointing Tour de France, his form appears to be improving.

Chris Boardman is the only other Briton competing in a record entry of 152 and says that he has recovered from the shoulder injury that forced him to retire from the Tour de France. By Tour de France standards, the race is not fully, but the decisive move could come during the final three laps of the five-mile finishing circuit at Rochester, which includes a one-mile climb over cobbles.

The event has drawn most of Europe's top riders, including the world road race champion, Johan Museeuw, who is also the World Cup-holder, although he is at present outside of the world's top ten. Rolf Sørensen, of Denmark, riding for the Rabobank team, leads the competition by four points from Michele Bartoli, with Marcus Zberg, of Switzerland, trailing a further 88 points behind.

## Thatcher's legacy alive and well as Chelsea take a swipe

SIMON BARNES



On Saturday

turning up in another guise — the very scheme that clubs such as Chelsea so loudly condemned as unwelcome. Ah well, Thatcherism, footballism... these things tend to end in tears.

### 'armless bandits

After the civil war in Albania, the football championship has begun again. Just four teams from four cities are involved, but the country is still not entirely safe. The other day, Flamurtari, of Valona, travelling by coach to a match in Tirana and were ambushed by armed bandits, who came on board demanding money. Then realisation hit the bandits. "Aren't you the champions from Flamurtari?" "We are." The bandits apologised and stepped off the coach.

### Super squabble

The Australian Rugby League Super League row rumbles on. The sport is split, it seems irrevocably, between the Australian Rugby League

and the so-called Super League. Attempts to bridge this terrible gap are foundering on the word "Super". At a recent meeting of the ARL clubs were told that trying to market the name Super League "would be like trying to market salmonella pies", (which are, I believe, something of a delicacy over there). The Super League itself will make no clear indication as to whether or not the word "Super" is negotiable. Hyper League, perhaps?

It gets to me every time. You walk up to Twickenham and you get your bag searched. What for? To see if you have a can of beer or a hip flask about your person. You pass through the gates and what do you see? A vast open-air bar. This is not security. This is rampant profiteering by means of physical intrusion.

They tried a similar system at the new home of Atlanta Braves, the modestly-named Turner Field, named after the Braves' modest owner, Ted



Turner. People who go to American sports tend to do so with gaping holes in their stomachs and so Turner was able to charge a hefty price for the food concessions.

As part of the deal, he said that he would ban supporters from bringing their own food into the stadium. A kind of arms race developed: greater efforts at smuggling, greater force from the, as it were, customs and excise men — and ever greater prices for the food on sale in the stadium.

Items confiscated included mothers' milk for babies in arms and sugar-free "cookies" for diabetics. But the hungry folk of the United States won the day. Turner — who said that even he was astonished by the food prices — has backed down. You can once again bring your own peanuts and crackjacks to the ball game.

### Heaven can wait

I am pleased to announce that the final of the Church Times annual cricket competition, for teams of Anglican clergy, will take place on September 4 at Southgate. Bishop David Sheppard will present the trophy in his year of retirement. The match will be between the dioceses of Chester and Oxford; the Bishop of Chester will be the twelfth man for his side. I wish them all a wonderful match and hope that the Borgia-esque machinations of the Jardine-like captain of the Vatican XI (in the past, regular opponents of mighty Tewin Irregulars) will not be repeated at Southgate.

□ The Nicolas Fawcett Shane Warne Fizzometer stands at 20.

## TENNIS

### Costa falls to flying Rusedski

By Our Sports Staff

TIM HENMAN returned to form and Greg Rusedski upset the seedings to reach the last eight of the Pilot Pen International tournament at New Haven, Connecticut on Thursday night.

Henman, who had been so uncertain whilst narrowly escaping against Daniel Vacek, of the Czech Republic, earlier in the event, played with increasing assurance to overcome Brett Steven, of New Zealand, 6-4, 6-4, while Rusedski was at his ferocious best in overcoming Albert Costa, of Spain. The British No 2 may break into the world's top 20 for the first time after a 6-3, 7-6 victory in which he produced 15 aces and the fiercest commitment.

One break of service helped to earn him the first set and after he immediately recovered his loss of service at the beginning of the second, the match went with service until an enthralling tie-break. Henman's win has earned him a match against Yevgeny Kafelnikov, of Russia, the No 1 seed. Henman's timing off the ground was far better and although he rarely served and volleyed, he rallied effectively from the back of the court and often picked his moments to approach the net cleverly.

Henman also served with penetration with his first delivery, producing 13 aces, two of them in succession to finish the match. "Last week, I was rock bottom and I didn't play very well in my first match here," Henman said. "However, I think that was a turning point."

## NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL

### Yeovil relish return to top-flight status

By Walter Gamble

WHILE Hereford United reluctantly start life in the Vauxhall Conference today with a gentle-looking assignment against Welling United, Yeovil Town, among the more enthusiastic newcomers, kick off the season with the pick of the first-day matches against Stevenage Borough.

Yeovil, with decades of frustrated ambition behind them and an abundant reservoir of potential support, are the sort of club for which the Conference and its subsequent avenue to the Football League was created. Yet twice since being founder members in 1979, they have tumbled into the Isthmian League.

Now they are restored after a two-year absence, as Isthmian League champions, under the forceful leadership of Graham Roberts, who, at 38, is only now beginning to contemplate scaling down his playing commitments. Roberts has recruited Owen Pickard, the former Plymouth Argyle and Hereford United forward, from Dorchester Town, the Dorset League club, for £15,000 as replacement for Howard Forinton, who, with Jerry Gill, a defender, moved to Birmingham City for a combined total of £100,000.

In Stevenage, the 1996 champions, Yeovil will meet a side also filling in gaps left by the loss to Nationwide League football of Barry Hayles (Bristol Rovers), Paul Barrowcliff (Brentford) and Elezbor Scobic (Macclesfield Town). Their cause has not been helped by the loss of Paul Thompson, a forward signed for £15,000 from Gateshead who collected a serious ankle

injury in a pre-season match. Nevertheless, for Yeovil it still promises to be a stern reintegration to a league in which the kind of pushovers, available at lower levels will not be forthcoming.

Another intriguing encounter is the meeting at Kingfield between Woking, with John McGovern, their new manager, and Telford United, under the stewardship of Steve Daley, once a £1 million footballer, who took over when Jake King brought his short spell at Bucks Head to a close when switching to Shrewsbury Town.

Kidderminster Harriers, away to Stalybridge Celtic, and Rushden and Diamonds, at home to Northwich Victoria, start as joint-favourites with Stevenage. Kidderminster, overhauled by Macclesfield last year, have spent a modest portion of the fee paid by West Bromwich Albion for Lee Hughes on signing Adie Smith, from Bromsgrove Rovers for £15,000.

Rushden, in Brian Talbot's first full season as manager, will be hoping to keep up the strong form that they showed to finish last season. They have brought in Adrian Foster, top scorer in Hereford's relegation season, to reinforce their attack.

Hereford, bidding to emulate Lincoln City and Darlington and gain an instant return to their former status, have added Neil Grayson, from Northampton Town, as a replacement. Tony Agana, who has been brought in to hand to remind his colleagues what lies in store — having begun his footballing travels at Welling.







## Lamb implications for league







## FOOTBALL SATURDAY



Hateley, who has played on some of the greatest stages in the game, is now at home in the rather more humble surroundings of Boothferry Park, the home of Hull City

## Hateley sets new agenda

Mark Hateley is talking about aggression when the phone starts to ring in his small, rectangular office at Boothferry Park. A pass can be aggressive, he is saying, a run can be aggressive. The phone keeps ringing, shrill and insistent, and he breaks off from his strictures to stare at it as if it were perpetrating an imperiousness. He reaches over, lifts the receiver a fraction of an inch from the handset and puts it straight back down.

It is more important to him than ever now, this aggression that has been his watchword for so long. It was the quality that defined his career, the thing that made him outjump his marker in the Maracanã Stadium all those years ago to head his famous goal against Brazil, the attitude that drove him to the challenge of playing for AC Milan at the age of 21 and took him to a succession of leading clubs across Europe.

In his new world, it is one of the only constants that he has to cling to. There is still a diamond stud embedded in his left ear and his tall, lean frame is still draped in a succession of sharp suits, but they will not help him in the dark places he is about to explore at the wrong end of the Nationwide League.

Six weeks ago, Hateley accepted the position of player-manager of Hull City, one that a national newspaper described as "the job from hell" last season after the previous incumbent, Terry Dolan, was subjected to a supporters' hate campaign. So far, his new charges have managed a 2-0 defeat to Mansfield Town and a goalless draw with Macclesfield Town. This afternoon,

they will try to give Hateley his first victory as player-manager when they take on Notts County.

Not for Hateley the leap from a high-profile playing career to one of the plum managerial posts, the route of a Bryan Robson, a Ray Wilkins or a Gordon Strachan. Hateley is in the basement of football, surrounded by the trappings of mediocrity at a club where a 10th model of a windscreens sits in the reception area, a commemorative of the launch of the Auto Windscreens Shield in 1994 and the closest the club have got to silverware for some time.

The irony, which may not be lost on Hateley, is that he seems eminently better equipped than any of the above mentioned former internationals to be a success as a coach. It is not so much his playing credentials that are so impressive — though they stand up beside those of the rest — but the fact that after barely a month in the job, he has developed a Gordon Gecko-met-Terry Buncher style that marks him out as a prototype of a managerial hard man for the new millennium.

Above all, he is a consummate professional, hard-working, well-presented, polite in a brusque, matter-of-fact sort of way and honest in a manner that could become brutal. He may be one of those rare men made for management, someone who genuinely does not care if he is liked as long as he is respected, someone whose career could scale greater heights in a position of authority than it did as a player.

"I will be a hard man to play under," Hateley says. "I will be a taskmaster. I like standards, you see. I have always

## OLIVER HOLT



The players of Hull City have found that their manager is a tough taskmaster

driven myself to those standards and beyond. I have said to the players that anything less than that and they will be out. But you should not have to discipline players. If they go by the rules and give me what I want, then there won't be a problem.

"I am a like-to-take-charge sort of person and one thing I have done already is that if any of the players come up here to the ground for anything, it has got to be a suit and tie. A jacket, a shirt and tie. I am a great believer in



Hateley in his striking heyday with AC Milan

setting good standards from day one. If you dress smart, you'll play smart. It's easy to get out of bed in the morning and throw a tracksuit on, but if you take your time when you get dressed in the morning, you wake yourself up and you're switched on. It's an attitude of mind.

"I had a lot of offers in the summer, playing offers from America and Europe, better financial offers than I had here, but as soon as I spoke to Tim Wilby, the new chairman here, it felt right. He was a very positive, very aggressive sort of guy, very similar to me, wanted what I wanted out of life.

same ambitions. The club has got a new regime now. It is very ambitious and I think it is a great opportunity for me. This is the level I wanted to come in at. I have always had great ambitions and I would love to be managing in the Premiership in four years' time. I know it is not going to be easy, but if I apply myself as I have done throughout my playing career, it should be easier. I am always moving my targets. I go to the targets and then I set new ones and that is what I do here."

Hateley has been around football since his childhood. The son of Tony Hateley, the former Chelsea and Coventry City striker, he was born in Liverpool 35 years ago and began his career with Coventry. He moved down a division to Portsmouth, but Bobby Robson took him on the England tour of South America in 1984 and the goal against Brazil — after an even more memorable one from John Barnes — cemented his reputation.

That prompted AC Milan to sign him and he had two successful seasons there before Silvio Berlusconi took over at the club and instigated the signings of Ruud Gullit, Frank Rijkaard and Marco van Basten. He moved on to AS Monaco under the tutelage of Arsène Wenger and then came back to Britain to play for Rangers, where he finished his career at the highest level last season after brief interludes with Queens Park Rangers and Leeds United.

Now, he has moved to a club that gradually plucked the depths under the guidance of Dolan and finished seventh in the third division last season, just ten points clear of falling into the Vauxhall Cup

reference. Hull has been bought by David Lloyd, the former tennis player, present British Davis Cup captain and leisure centre multi-millionaire, and a more expansive approach, including a move to a different stadium, has been promised. However, it will still be a huge task to drag Hull from the mire.

"It was more the majority rather than the minority who were giving the previous manager stick," Hateley said. "They were very disappointed at what he was doing and quite rightly so. I have got the same players that he had and basically, they can all play. If you take a club as far down as he did, you are going to get trouble, but before this season even started, we got 16,000 people for three games in a week and it took them four months last year to get that number through the door. I have got no idea what my resources are going to be yet and I don't know what the budget is going to be. I do know that we have got 40-odd players on the books here, which is far too many and that is going to have to get trimmed down. That is the first bit of the management pressure, telling people they are not going to be wanted, but it has to be dealt with and then we will move on."

"They like to see good football here and we will play football. I have told the players that we will pass the ball all day and that if you stop passing the ball, I will have you off. It is straightforward. We have a couple of formations, a pattern of play and, basically, they do the job I ask them to do."

One suspects that there will not be too many dissenters.

## United need Beckham from start

The FA Carling Premiership is now two games old — or young — but already there seems to be a startling imbalance between the product and the propaganda. Millions have been spent on transfers, millions will go into players' pockets and fans must pay higher and higher prices — there appears to be the law of diminishing returns.

I have seen, so far, five matches and eight different teams. Six and nine if you count the FA Charity Shield. Even making allowance for the recent intense hot weather, quality is at a premium.

If the European Cup is the ultimate criteria, it surely finds our contestants wanting. Only an appalling decision by the referee, ignoring Asprilla's foul on the Croatia Zagreb goalkeeper, allowed Newcastle United, admittedly short of Shearer, their meagre 2-1 win in the first leg of a preliminary round tie on Wednesday.

Watching Manchester United prevail at Tottenham Hotspur in the league the previous weekend, it was significant that, for all their second-half superiority, United won through a couple of comic goals. The first came after confusion in the Tottenham defence, a fortuitous deflection and a moment's amnesia, whereby Carr put United outside. The second was a own goal. United's lack of thrust up front was palpable.

Sheringham, for all his wiles, is slow, Jordi Cruyff, praised by Alex Ferguson for his talent, looks lightweight. Cole, absent with an abscess, has never seemed the answer. Ole Gunnar Solskjær, when he returns, will carry an enormous burden. Then there is the question of David Beckham — or rather of Ferguson's almost perverse treatment of him.

With some justice, Ferguson was never enamoured of Le Tournoi de France, while Beckham's romantic life — surely his own and nobody else's business — had been splashed across the front pages. So Ferguson seems to have quite arbitrarily decided that Beckham must be fired, using him merely and wastefully as substitute in the Charity Shield and in United's opening league games. In each of them, Beckham came on to galvanise a side that had stuttered without him.

Liverpool, who appeared to have bought wonderfully well — Ince, Leonhardson, Danny Murphy — when they might have picked up a goalkeeper, got just one point in their first two games, losing at home to Leicester City. So far the parts are manifestly greater than the whole.

The Barcelona-Sol McManus saga is a strange one. However high the price, whatever the implications of the Bosman ruling, could Liverpool afford to lose him? Not least when he has grown up at Anfield, committed to the colours. True, there is

no sentiment in business, but even at £12 million, would this have been good business? Who, and for how much, might they have bought in his place?

Arsenal, tipped by their former manager, George Graham, seriously or otherwise, for the title, have a superb spearhead in Ian Wright and Dennis Bergkamp, are entitled to hope for great things from Marc Overmars, but are surprisingly short of cover in defence, lack invention in midfield, need more than Ray Parlour gives them on the right and have yet to tighten up their discipline.

As for Chelsea, ignominiously beaten by a Coventry City team that looked impotent at Highbury, their transfer policy is bewildering. Endowed with two excellent young backs, Granville and Babayaro, though the Nigerian is injured,

## BRIAN GLANVILLE



they splash out £5 million for Le Seax, whom they had sold to Black Rovers (a team to watch) for £690,000.

Awash with goalkeepers, even though Kharine is not yet quite fit, they spent £2.5 million on the Dutch giant, De Gea, who finds it hard to get a cross. The final inconsistency that has been theirs over the decades seems to be their silly good bets in the cup, capable of beating anybody on their day — or of losing to anybody else.

West Ham United look promising. Eyal Berkovic, the neorealist little Israeli, gives new flair and snap to the midfield, though we shall see whether he can keep up his form throughout the winter. The precocious poise, elegance and skill of Rio Ferdinand should make him a full international before long, perhaps alongside the dominating presence of Tottenham's commanding Sol Campbell, a player who has amply proved his international class. We must hope his knee injury proves only transient. So, indeed, must the beleaguered Spurs.

But Leicester, Wimbledon and Barnsley reassure us that money is not everything and a league that throws up such resilient young talents as Emile Heskey, Michael Owen and Rio Ferdinand cannot be all bad.

Continuing his series, Mark Hodgkinson finds Barnsley adjusting to a new profile

## Falling victim to first-day nerves

Television regularly serves up dramas on the theme of apocalypse. The bomb is about to drop, heads fall into hands, misanthropists prowling the streets: the whole world has gone Roswell. Barnsley town centre had this sense of eeriness last Saturday afternoon. At Oakwell, home of Barnsley FC, just a mile away, there was colour and life, but the centre could have been brushed by tumbleweed.

Marks & Spencer was deathly quiet, like a Sunday staff training day. The only customers were a handful of old ladies cruising the aisles in search of corn plaster and tins of butter beans; nothing, not even a measly Armageddon, deters these ladies.

Peter Gibbons, the manager of Boots, confirmed that trade had been affected by Barnsley's debut in the FA Carling Premiership. He had no complaints though, three of the Barnsley players had recently popped in for a pedicure. "They carried themselves off well," he said, almost with a hint of surprise, as if he believed that every footballer had learnt etiquette from Carlton Palmer.

The only signs of life were young men outside pubs, glasses of beer in hand, high on anticipation. Many were wearing their replica Barnsley shirts, but others had taken them off to reveal chicken soup skin, going tomato in the sun.

It was not so long ago when a match at Oakwell would go on almost unnoticed by residents living in the red-brick houses around the ground. On Saturday, they waved from deckchairs as the crowd filtered through.

BBC trucks had commandeered part of the car park and cameras roamed in search of a yoke with a quote. The queues for

## LIFE AT THE TOP



Barnsley supporter was wearing a team shirt and, clearly inspired, the team were beating West Ham United 1-0 after just nine minutes. The visitors went on to win 2-1, but on Tuesday, Barnsley picked up their first Premiership points

match programmes stretched into the side streets and new businesses had appeared overnight — badge selling, burger selling, Barnsley selling.

The pre-match entertainment was a tad choreographed, but, on such a momentous day, nothing was left to chance. The crowd sang — rather unoriginally — "You'll never walk alone" and hundreds of balloons were released from beneath a giant canopy. It appeared as if every

with a victory at Crystal Palace. The win has lifted the pallor of anticlimax that settled over the town on Saturday evening. Back in 1898, when Barnsley were elected to the Football League, one committee member muttered his concern that the team "might not uphold the dignity of the club in such surroundings."

On Tuesday evening, in South London, Barnsley damned any brooding home-grown, own-goal logic by upholding their dignity and raising themselves to ninth in the table.

Barnsley is a club waking up to its new status. It aspires to the hospitality age, but there remains an anachronistic, home-spun charm. A phone call to the ground, for example, is answered by a real person, rather than the spurious politeness of an automated switchboard.

The toilets at the rear of the West Stand are open to the elements and visiting supporters are housed in a stand without a roof. Meanwhile, the other two stands are magnifi-



A Barnsley training session attracts a crowd of schoolchildren, whiling away the summer holidays

cent and the entrance to the ground features a vertical curved window set in brick, giving it a distinctly ecclesiastical touch. It is this nearby, half-finished quality that makes Oakwell unique in the top division.

At the end of last season, a handful of reporters were housed among the fans, but the press box has been expanded this term to deal with the deluge. There are

plenty of seats, although the angles between them suggest that measurements were taken using Dennis Wise as the average. When Kevin Pressman might have been more appropriate.

The programme is a colourful and detailed affair, but here Barnsley again reveals its mixture of pragmatism and ambition. There are assiduously researched articles running alongside "Tommy Tyke

See". Tommy wears a cloth cap, scarf and bemused expression and talks to the world in a treacle thick South Yorkshire accent. He has a special message to the cynics: "We're goin' ter surprise a few fowk, an slap egg all over 'flects of scoffers."

A club big enough to laugh at itself might well be big enough to survive in the FA Carling Premiership.



## FOOTBALL SATURDAY

## Time to tell real story behind collapse of move that never was

The time has come to put the record straight. I went to Barcelona because Liverpool Football Club agreed a fee with them. No player can speak to another club without being given permission by his own club. That may seem an obvious statement, but after the week I have endured, it is necessary to spell it out. The one fact that I would like to stress above all others is that I had never even crossed my mind that I would leave Liverpool until they told me about their deal with Barcelona.

I am amazed, and quite appalled, by some of the reaction to my visit to the Spanish city. Apparently, Barcelona have suggested that they did not sign me because I asked for too much money. I did not even meet anyone from Barcelona. I knew 15 minutes before the flight from England that

there was a less than five per cent chance of the deal being done.

From the moment I arrived at the airport in the city to the moment I flew out on Friday morning, I did not speak to one representative from the club. I went to the hotel, I went for a meal and then travelled to Majorca, with friends.

Before we left the airport in England, my advisor spoke to Joan Gaspart, a vice-president of the club, on a mobile telephone and that was only a brief conversation attempting to set out what we might talk about. Gaspart was not even in Barcelona when we arrived; he seemed to be elsewhere negotiating with another player.

As he is the man charged with negotiating transfers, I think it is ridiculous — and actionable — to suggest that the deal fell through because I am greedy. There was no

deal and I think even the most naive of people can appreciate that Barcelona were actually negotiating with another player because they eventually signed him.

Why they asked me to go over there and then did not even bother to meet me or open serious negotiations, I have no idea, but I think it is clear that they were attempting to persuade another player to join them.

Obviously, they concluded a deal with the Brazilian (Rivaldo, from Deportivo La Coruña) and therefore did not feel it necessary to talk to me. They did feel the need to explain to their fans why the deal fell through and they did this by calling me greedy. It was convenient for them.

I am not bitter, not angry, not devastated, because I only went to Barcelona out of respect for my club to hear what they had to say. I



have said all along that I would only ever leave Liverpool if they no longer wanted me and I stand by that now.

I did not want to join Barcelona. I want to play for Liverpool. I am born and bred in the area and my family all live there. It is the place dearest to me and I am happy there, so the fact that they have not sold me to Barcelona can hardly make me angry.

What has surprised me is the way that the situation developed. I was surprised when Liverpool said they had agreed a fee for me and they would allow me to talk to the

Spaniards because, as I am under contract, they could simply have said "no way".

I am even more surprised that a fee was agreed for me when it became increasingly obvious that Barcelona did not, in fact, want to sign me. I am also slightly puzzled that Liverpool then issued a statement suggesting that they have tried and failed to negotiate with me for months.

At the top of the column, I said I want to put the record straight and the truth is that before the Barcelona interest, Liverpool had made only one offer, many months ago,

when they talked about the prospect of a new deal. I was called into the manager's office and, after we talked, they wrote some figures on the top of a scrap of paper and handed it to me. My reply was that I was happy with the offer in principle, without committing myself.

They told me they wanted to talk to my adviser, but there was no further contact with him or with my lawyer. I was happy to leave it because I still had more than two years left on my contract. I wanted to concentrate on the run-in to the end of the season when we were chasing the FA Carling Premiership title and the Cup Winners' Cup.

I have two years left on my contract and I have no reason to do a new deal now. I am more than happy to stay at Liverpool and it seems a natural way to approach discussions with a player who still has two years left on his contract.

What upsets me more than anything else is that the supporters of Liverpool may have been given the impression that I want to leave the club. I hope that every single supporter at Anfield reads this column and understands that I did not want to leave. The fact that Liverpool had talks with Barcelona, without my knowledge, has nothing to do with me. I am just pleased that I am back at Liverpool. I think the supporters would

have been unhappy if I had left and that is an important consideration to me.

Already, I have had lots of contact from the supporters and they are concerned about the situation. I understand how they feel and I must stress again that I am pleased to be back. Under circumstances such as these, there are a lot of half-truths, a lot of misrepresentations and the supporters can get the wrong picture. That is why I have attempted to put the record straight.

Certain papers have accused me of all sorts of things, when they clearly have no idea what happened. That is irresponsible and it is the supporters and myself who suffer.

I will be back in training on Monday and, as far as I am concerned, I am as committed to Liverpool Football Club as I have always been. I am proud to play for Liverpool.

As I have stressed, I am not angry at the events of this week, just a little surprised and puzzled, particularly at the behaviour of Barcelona, but it pays to be philosophical about such things in football and I can offer a guarantee to our supporters that I will not let it affect the way I play for the club.

STEVE MCMANAMAN

## FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

	PLAYED	POINTS	GOALS	HOME					AWAY					LAST 10 MATCHES W-D-L	OVERALL
				W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A		
1. BLACKBURN ROVERS	2	6	+5	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	4	0	2-0-0	W2
2. MANCHESTER UTD	2	6	+3	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	2-0-0	W2
3. WEST HAM UTD	2	6	+2	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	2	1	2-0-0	W2
4. LEICESTER CITY	2	6	+2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	2-0-0	W2
5. LEEDS UTD	2	4	+2	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	1	1-1-0	W1
6. ARSENAL	2	4	+2	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	1-1-0	W1
7. NEWCASTLE UTD	1	3	+1	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1-0-0	W1
8. BOLTON WANDERERS	1	3	+1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1-0-0	W1
9. BARNLEY	2	3	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	1-0-1	W1
10. CRYSTAL PALACE	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	1-0-1	L1
11. COVENTRY CITY	2	3	-1	1	0	0	3	2	0	0	1	0	2	1-0-1	L1
12. WIMBLEDON	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0-1-0	D1
13. LIVERPOOL	2	1	-1	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	1	1	0-1-1	L1
13. CHELSEA	1	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	0-0-1	L1
15. EVERTON	1	0	-1	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0-0-1	L1
16. DERBY COUNTY	1	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0-0-1	L1
17. SOUTHAMPTON	2	0	-2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0-0-2	L2
18. SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY	2	0	-3	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	1	1	2	0-0-2	L2
19. TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR	2	0	-3	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	2	0-0-2	L2
20. ASTON VILLA	2	0	-5	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	1	0	1	0-0-2	L2

## WEEKEND MATCHES

## TODAY

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated

\* denotes all-ticket match

Pools coupon numbers in brackets

Nationwide League

First division

(1) Charlton v Oxford Utd

(2) \* Crewe v West Bromwich

(3) Portsmouth v Port Vale

(4) \* Reading v Swindon

(5) Stockport v Bury

(6) Wolverhampton v Sheffield Utd

(7) \* Barnet v Exeter

(8) \* Chesham v Havant

(9) \* Havant v Chesham

(10) \* Havant v Chesham

(11) \* Havant v Chesham

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## FOOTBALL SATURDAY

# European outlook clouded by concern

By Kevin McCarr

THE hush that fell over Scottish football yesterday was appropriate for a period of mourning. The most troubling of the poor results in Europe was suffered by Rangers and, after that 3-0 defeat by IFK Gothenburg in the European Cup, they seemed not only to be grieving, but also to have withdrawn from public life.

Their chairman, David Murray, was, however, willing to confirm that Walter Smith, the manager, will not be dismissed. The absence of wider comment from Rangers stemmed from the fact that they have no match this weekend, since their game at Kilmarnock was postponed due to the absence of several players on international duty. It is also right, however, that the leading Scottish League premier division clubs should have little to say for themselves.

Kilmarnock were the only one of the four representatives

Non-league preview ..... 40  
Haley at Hull ..... 44  
Steve McManusman ..... 45

to succeed in Europe and a 2-1 victory over Shelbourne at Rugby Park in the Cup-Winners' Cup, with the winner arriving in injury time, can barely be passed off as a renaissance. Dundee United are also left to brood, having failed to score an away goal in Turkey and so giving Trabzonspor a 1-0 advantage to carry into the second leg.

Celtic, by all accounts, should be rather ashamed by a 2-1 defeat against Tirol Innsbruck in Austria. While giving them a sound chance of reaching the first round in the UEFA Cup, it also disguised the low quality of their performance. Elevating the standards, at home to Dunfermline Athletic, may prove awkward, with Stephanie Mahe, Morten Wieghorst and Alan Stubbs all likely to be absent through injury.

There are no new signings at the club either. The deadline for registering players for the next round of the UEFA Cup has passed and neither Marc Rieper, of West Ham United, nor Paolo Alves, of Sporting Lisbon, has yet been signed.

Jorge Cadete, who is at home in Lisbon and reportedly suffering from depression, has been linked with a move to the Spanish club, Celta Vigo.

For once, it is Scotland's less prominent clubs who are in the grip of high spirits. Hibernian sound especially brash, given that they required a play-off to avoid relegation. A few new signings and a win over Celtic on the opening day of the season have been stimulating.

There is an endearing quality about Hibernian in their readiness to place their trust in the inherently unreliable. Chris Charnley is 34 and has been sent off 15 times in Scotland alone, but Jim Duffy, the manager at Easter Road, never hesitated to make him the mainstay of the side.

The midfield player struck the winner against Celtic and contrived to score from 50 yards against Aloua, in the Coca-Cola Cup, last weekend. However, Dundee United, tomorrow's opponents, are adept at neutralising the opposition's dangers and the true worth of the flair possessed by men such as Charnley and Tony Rougier will be examined at Tannadice. In this game, Hibernian may find a reliable indication of their prospects this season.

These are weeks, however, when every club is carrying out self-assessment. Having been overwhelmed at times against Rangers at Ibrox, Heart of Midlothian should find a more suitable yardstick in this afternoon's fixture with Aberdeen at Tynecastle. The visitors have had an adventurous summer in the transfer market and although a few newcomers are injured at present, a revival is anticipated. Yet, after the goalless game against Kilmarnock, supporters will be eager for evidence that the return of Eoin Jess has brought greater menace to the side.

Motherwell, should they defeat St Johnstone at Fir Park today, will take over the leadership of the premier division. In early August, such a position may have no concrete value, but encouragement such as this is still welcome at a club that had been numbered among the candidates for relegation.



Houghton will be looking to put the experience gained from 18 years as a player to good use at Elm Park, on and off the pitch

## Houghton adds words to action

Russell Kempson meets an Ireland international relishing his dual role in the first division

Instead of sitting and relaxing on the grass, after an up-tempo training session in the midday sun, Ray Houghton stands and holds court. He talks to those lounging before him and imparts a smidgen of the knowledge gleaned from 18 years in the game.

Houghton is still the player, but now also the coach. His team-mates listen intently to the calm yet authoritative Glaswegian brogue.

Houghton, 35, is with his seventh club — Reading, of the Nationwide League first division — and is easing into his new role since being released by Crystal Palace during the summer. He felt he still had much to offer Palace for their FA Carling Premiership campaign, but, on returning from holiday in Portugal, he discovered that he was unwanted and unemployed.

Steve Coppell, the Palace manager, had been trying to reach him at his home in Loughton, Essex, but had spoken only to the answering machine. "I eventually got the message, rang Steve and that was it," Houghton said. "It was a bit of a shock at first. I'd played in the top flight for ten years and I thought that my experience would help. Obviously, that wasn't the case."

Ray Lewington, Palace's first-team coach, offered more positive advice. Terry Bullivant, a mutual friend, had moved from Barnet to Reading in the close season. He suggested that Houghton contact him, which he did, and visions of the dole queue swiftly evaporated.

Elm Park's long-awaited back-room revamp had finally materialised, comprising Bullivant, the manager, Allan Harris, his assistant and former No.2 to Terry Venables at Barcelona, Houghton, the player-coach, and Alan Pardew.

the reserve team coach and former Palace player. They have been charged with securing first-division survival during the final term at Elm Park and safe passage to a new multipurpose stadium on the edge of town. It could be a considerable task.

"I'd been thinking of getting into coaching for some time," Houghton said. "I did a little bit. I got a taste for it, when Dave Bassett was managing at Palace. I'd speak my mind, in the dressing-room before or during a game. If I saw something wasn't right or noticed something that was relevant."

"This is a great chance for me and I'm enjoying it. Having not done it properly before, you never know exactly what you've got to do, but the other guys make it easy. They just tell me to go and do what I want, to do what feels right."

Born in Glasgow, of Scottish-Irish parentage, Houghton left for England at ten years old. Trials with Arsenal and Queens Park Rangers proved brief and, at 16, he started work for J & B Whisky in London as a clerk, despatching the amber nectar to all parts of the United States.

Three years with West Ham United produced one appearance as a substitute, but success was only a characteristically short, scurrying step away. With Fulham, he missed promotion to the old first division in the last game of the season; with Oxford United, he made his first appearance at Wembley when they won the Milk Cup in 1986.

He collected four winners' medals with Liverpool — two in the championship, two in the FA Cup — and helped Aston Villa lift the Coca-Cola Cup in 1994. Palace also benefited from his midfield industry, when they returned to the Premiership via the play-offs last season.

Ireland holds special memories, too. He scored the goal — his first of five in 69 internationals — when they defeated England 1-0 in Stuttgart in the 1988 European championship final. "To score against England was something I'd always dreamt about," he said with a smile, momentarily betraying his true heritage.

A year later, he was afforded a hero's welcome by the inhabitants of Buncrana, Co Donegal, where his father, James, had been brought up. "They just wanted to say well done and thank me for the goal," he said. "They held a civic reception and thousands of people turned up, with flags flying and bands playing. Dad, hadn't been there for years and it was nice for him to go back. Not long after, he died."

Another Houghton goal secured a 1-0 victory against Italy in Giants Stadium, New York, in the 1994 World Cup finals and he relishes the prospect of Ireland again reaching the concluding stages of the tournament in France next year. Beating Lithuania on Wednesday, in a qualifying match in Dublin, would help the cause.

Coming to Reading was a bit of a culture shock at first," he said. "You're used to playing with so many top-class players and it's a real eye-opener, but the attitude of everyone here is excellent and if we don't succeed, it won't be through the lack of trying. Everyone wants to learn, listen and do well."

The new player-coach leads a warm-up session before training

ers, Mark McGhee, their manager, expects to experience a more challenging task this afternoon.

"United are a big, strong side, probably more powerful than we are, so we will need to pass the ball well," McGhee said. "They were very unlucky not to go up last season and I think they will be strong candidates again."

Stockport County, who have lost their first two matches, open their Edgeley Park campaign against Bury, the team that pipped them to the second division title last season. Gary Megson, the Stockport manager, will play his four new signings — Martin McIntosh, Ian Gray, Colin Woodthorpe and Vassilios Kaligeracos.

Reading play Swindon Town at Elm Park, with Carl Asaba, their recent £800,000 capture from Brentford, making his home league debut, while Portsmouth include Matthias Svensson, their Swedish striker, against Port Vale at Fratton Park. He has recovered from a leg injury.

Crewe Alexandra, already beaten twice this season, take on West Bromwich Albion at Gresty Road and Charlton Athletic play Oxford United at The Valley. Dean Purse, the Oxford centre back, deputises for Phil Whelan, who is injured.

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## Little forced to rethink after Villa's calamitous first week

By Richard Hobson

IT SOUNDS so simple. Solidity at the back established, Brian Little merely had to strengthen his attacking force to mould Aston Villa into a side that could make a realistic challenge for the FA Carling Premiership title.

After their worst start for 15 years, however, the break this weekend could not come at a better time for the Villa manager. Successive defeats leave them bottom of the table and the goals against column — five conceded — is at least as great a concern as the failure to score in each of the first two matches.

The team, 3-0 down, was booted off the field at Villa Park after the first half against Blackburn Rovers on Wednesday night and the eventual 4-0 defeat was their heaviest since April 1995. While it is too early in the season to talk of decline and failure, the modern world of top-level football, with its lucrative rewards, demands prompt solutions when problems arise. There is rarely the scope for a step backwards in the quest to stride ever forwards.

In the period before Villa face Newcastle United next Saturday, Little must decide whether to continue with his ambitious three-man forward line or revert to the 3-5-2 formation that has enabled Villa Cup qualification in each of the past two seasons. "Perhaps there is a need to get back to a system which has brought us some degree of success," Little said.

Yet a feeling emerged towards the end of last season that opponents, at least the best of them, had become comfortable against the "old" Villa. Little said on the eve of the season that flexibility was now the key to his side's development. He could not have anticipated that the defence — the second-weakest behind Arsenal over the past two seasons — would begin to struggle.

A section of supporters are unhappy at a lack of transfer activity over the summer after a stock exchange flotation in May that raised £15 million. Other than Stan Collymore, a predictable acquisition, the only fresh face is that of a fringe player, Simon Grayson. Contrast this with the activity at Liverpool, Newcastle and Arsenal, three of the four clubs who finished above Villa last season.

Mark Draper, the most creative of their midfield players, has endured a lean year and was fortunate to play ahead of Ian Taylor, against Blackburn. Upo Ekeogu, who Little insists is fully fit, has appeared particularly hesitant in a four-man defence, while the new system has offered far less scope for Alan Wright to roam the left flank.

Collymore has made a subdued introduction to his new club. This is, perhaps, not surprising as he had never played in a three-man attack before the opening day of the season against Leicester City. Against Newcastle, he can expect to partner Dwight Yorke in a more orthodox front line with Savo Milosevic likely to drop out.

"We do not often lose two games in a row, so we have to take stock and be sensible," Little said. "People think they feel worse than everybody else, but I can tell them nobody feels worse than me at the moment. It is my responsibility and I am not going to hide from it. I will learn quickly and try to do what is right over the next few days."

IT IS early days yet, of course, but many pre-season pundits already have a large smattering of egg on face. Blackburn Rovers at the top of the FA Carling Premiership? Aston Villa pointless, goalless, and bottom? Leicester City winning at Liverpool? Perhaps Ken Bates, the irascible Chelsea chairman, got it right by declining to gaze into his Premiership crystal ball. "I don't like those silly predictions," he said. "If you say you're going to win it, you look arrogant. If you don't, you look a prat. I'd rather be neither."

STRANGE BUT TRUE... New Balance, the football footwear firm, uses synthetic snake and kangaroo in its boots.

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THE TIMES



GOLF: FALDO AND MONTGOMERIE STRUGGLING TO MAKE HALFWAY CUT AT US PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

# Rocca flies the flag for Europe

FROM JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT  
IN MARMONECK, NEW YORK

JUSTANTINO Rocca upheld the honour of European golf in the second round of the US PGA Championship at the TPC at Rye Brook, New York. Rocca, who injured a shoulder during a summer tour in mid-June, aggravated the injury further. Still, a second successive round of 69 for a 36-hole total of 138, two under par, gave the 35-year-old Italian a chance to make the cut. Rocca, who had a 100 per cent success rate in the first round, was the only European to make the cut.

Rocca did not want to talk about his shoulder, as if talking about it might hurt it. Suffice to say that he is better now than he was at the time of the injury. Rocca, who has been a member of the European Ryder Cup team since 1993, is a professional golfer. He is a member of the European Ryder Cup team since 1993. He is a professional golfer. He is a member of the European Ryder Cup team since 1993. He is a professional golfer.

The way that Rocca has hit the ball here suggests it is a shoulder injury. He has missed only three fairways in two rounds — accurate as if, indeed, on a course as tight as this one. Clearly, too, he is not a player who is iron-play is as sharp as a tack. On the short 10th, Rocca's six-iron ended five feet from the flag. On the 17th, he hit a six-iron to 15 feet for a second birdie of the inward all and then, bringing his sound to a crescendo, he hit a six-iron from 184 yards to the difficult, tilted 18th green and the ball rolled to within five feet of the hole.

All this and a Rocca putt, too, a putt like the one that he hit at St Andrews to tie with John Daly in the 1995 Open. That was 20 yards up and down the green. This one, on the 17th green, Colin Montgomerie would later take three putts, looked to be even longer. Rocca thought it was "This one was more long," he said in his engaging English.

Also finishing on 138 were Phil Blackmar and Jeff Maggert, one of the most consistent players on the US Tour. Maggert got to four under par after the 14th, but then dropped strokes on the next two holes, which was

what everybody was doing. The secret was not to be put off and to recover with a birdie as soon as possible.

Byron Nelson, the 85-year-old former US PGA champion, had some relevant advice on this for Justin Leonard, the 25-year-old Open champion. "On this course, you're going to make bogeys and so is everybody else," Nelson said to his fellow Texan. "When you hit it in the rough, just get it down there to where you've got an eight or nine-iron in your hands. Avoid making the big mistake."

This was what Daly had done in his first round, but it was not what Sam Torrance did at the start of his second. His pitch to the first green looked fine in the air. He glanced down at his divot, handed his club back to his caddy and then heard a gasp from the spectators. His ball had just failed to climb over a ridge in the green and was rolling back towards him. It set the tone for Torrance's round of 72, which left him worrying whether his six-over-par 146 would be good enough to beat the cut.

Something similar happened to Montgomerie on the first green. Trying to make up some of the ground that he had lost after a 74 on Thursday, Montgomerie's ball was 18 feet above the flag after two strokes, 30 feet away and below the hole after three. He dropped only one shot there and, somehow, avoided dropping any more at the next two holes.

There has been a frailty about Montgomerie, though, since the US Open. At Troon during the Open, it was his driving that let him down and, no sooner had he got himself back on track yesterday, with four successive birdies, than he took two strokes to get out of a bunker on the 6th, for a six and then took three putts for another six on the 9th.

Montgomerie's struggles were being mirrored by every other European competitor. In the first round, the leading candidates for the United States Ryder Cup team had an aggregate of two under par. Europe's ten were 26 over par. Just as well that the Ryder Cup is a matchplay and not strokeplay.

Nick Faldo needed to win this tournament to have any chance of qualifying for



Montgomerie feels the strain after a second-round 71 yesterday and a long wait to see if he waits the cut

## DETAILS FROM NEW YORK

United States unless stated

EARLY LEADERS AFTER TWO ROUNDS: 1. C. Rocca (69, 138); 2. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 3. J. Maggert (70, 138); 4. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 5. J. Maggert (70, 138); 6. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 7. J. Maggert (70, 138); 8. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 9. J. Maggert (70, 138); 10. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 11. J. Maggert (70, 138); 12. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 13. J. Maggert (70, 138); 14. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 15. J. Maggert (70, 138); 16. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 17. J. Maggert (70, 138); 18. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 19. J. Maggert (70, 138); 20. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 21. J. Maggert (70, 138); 22. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 23. J. Maggert (70, 138); 24. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 25. J. Maggert (70, 138); 26. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 27. J. Maggert (70, 138); 28. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 29. J. Maggert (70, 138); 30. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 31. J. Maggert (70, 138); 32. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 33. J. Maggert (70, 138); 34. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 35. J. Maggert (70, 138); 36. J. Blackmar (70, 138); 37. J. 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## RUGBY UNION 41

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pick for the  
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England forward shocked by Liverpool's willingness to sell him to Barcelona

## McManaman ponders future

By DAVID MADDOCK  
AND OLIVER HOLT

STEVE McMANAMAN will return to Merseyside this afternoon a troubled man. The England international could be forgiven for thinking that his frustrating experience in Barcelona is the signal for the beginning of the end of his Liverpool career.

McManaman returns a disillusioned footballer, not just at the treatment he received at the hands of Barcelona, but at the attitude of his Anfield club. Speaking last night, he revealed his surprise, and anger, that his club had agreed a deal with their Spanish counterparts, only to hint they did so because of his attitude to transfer negotiations.

In a statement released yesterday when the proposed £12.5-million transfer broke down even before negotiations were opened, Liverpool said: "For several months Liverpool Football Club attempted to renegotiate a new contract, without agreement, to keep the player beyond the length of his contract."

"This week, Liverpool received an eight-figure offer from Barcelona, and we felt

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obliged to inform the player and give him an opportunity, if he wished to, of speaking to them. At the same time, Liverpool again stressed that we wanted Steve to stay and sign a new contract."

But McManaman countered that Liverpool, far from going to great lengths to keep him, have, in fact, barely begun negotiations. "They told me they wanted me to stay, and I said I was happy in principle with their ideas," he said.

"But even though they made one offer just after the new year, they never contacted my adviser or lawyer to take it any further and I was happy to not pursue it because I had more than two years left on my contract."

"I spoke to Barcelona, because Liverpool said they had accepted an offer, and felt obliged to let me talk to them. I didn't want to leave Liverpool and it would be ridiculous to suggest that I have forced Liverpool to sell me. I'm more than happy to stay at Liverpool."

Whatever the confusion about McManaman's influence in promoting the possible transfer, it is clear that Liverpool are prepared to sell the player, and there is likely to be no shortage of takers. When news of the £12.5-million deal flashed across Europe, coaches at the top in Italy and Spain would have been alerted to the



While Rivaldo was presented as Barcelona's new signing yesterday, McManaman was left to slip away from his hotel and fly quietly back to Liverpool.

surprising news that the Merseyside club are ready to sell a home-grown player.

If Barcelona, possibly the world's biggest club, were considering the purchase of the player at a record fee for an Englishman leaving these shores, then it suggests clubs of similar stature will come to the same conclusion. What price McManaman displaying his elusive skills in Italian or Spanish colours before the season's end?

Amid the hullabaloo of the past 48 hours, the question of why Liverpool are prepared to sell has been overlooked but yesterday's statement hinted at it: Peter Robinson, the chief executive, is afraid that he could lose the player for nothing under the Bosman ruling should his contract be allowed to run out, and would

prefer to accept a sizeable fee now.

If McManaman does leave, then he must be hoping that any transfer goes more smoothly than that proposed by Barcelona. Speaking yesterday, he hinted strongly that the Catalan club had used him as an unwitting pawn in a complicated game of chess with their preferred target, Rivaldo, the man they eventually signed for around £15 million from Deportivo de la Coruña.

Barcelona had opened talks with him two weeks ago, as they did with Denilson, his fellow Brazilian. They had hit problems over both the fee and the salary with both players, and then decided to turn — apparently — to McManaman.

In fact, he says, they used

him, and then abused him to cover their tracks. "When I arrived in Barcelona, I did not meet a single person from the club," McManaman said. "Even before I flew out there, I realised there was a less than five per cent chance that I would join them. The man charged with negotiations at

*'I did not want to join Barcelona. I want to play for Liverpool. I was born there and my family lives there. It is the place dearest to me'*  
Steve McManaman  
World, page 45

the club was in fact away from the city, talking to another player and I think that they said the deal fell through because I was greedy as an excuse to their fans for why the deal fell through."

Bobby Robson, the Barcelona general manager, said last night that he had presented his report on McManaman to the Catalan giants on Thursday morning after watching him in action in FA Cup Premier League matches against Wimbledon on Saturday and Leicester City at Anfield on Wednesday night but that he was aware Barcelona were pursuing other options including Rivaldo.

"Rivaldo was one of the best players in Spain last season," Robson said. "I don't know how many goals he got but I would think it was more than

McManaman. He is great on free kicks, which we need. He has got a swerve and a dip. He is left-footed and he beats people."

"We have got Figo, who is a fantastic player on the right of midfield, and I think Louis van Gaal wanted somebody wide on the left. Rivaldo has got a lovely pass on him, too. He is in Barcelona having a medical and if he is fine, he will sign today."

Officials at the Catalan club told Spanish newspapers yesterday that they had warned McManaman against travelling to Barcelona while the club was still negotiating with other players. They repeated the claim that they had been dissuaded from signing the Englishman because of his demands for an annual salary of £2 million.

## Dalglish renews link with Rush

By OLIVER HOLT  
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

KENNY DALGLISH, the Newcastle United manager, last night took the Liverpool old boys' reunion — started this week when he signed John Barnes — a stage further by taking Ian Rush, his striking partner for so many years at Anfield, to St James' Park on a free transfer.

Rush, 35, who endured a miserable year at Elland Road last season after his move from Liverpool and scored just three goals in 36 Premiership appearances for Leeds, travelled to the North East yesterday and completed the transfer just before the deadline for eligibility for the Champions' League stage of the European Cup.

His signing on a one-year contract, prompted by the long-term injury to Alan Shearer and the sale of Les Ferdinand to Tottenham Hotspur, appears to confirm that Dalglish has not been given sufficient funds to buy a leading young striker. It comes after he added Stuart Pearce, 33, from Nottingham Forest, and Barnes, 33, to his squad, also on free transfers.

If anyone can see some dying embers from Rush's glorious career, though, it is the man who provided the Welshman with so much of his ammunition in their days at Liverpool. Dalglish was confident enough to make a wry aside about the age issue yesterday. "We are developing our youth policy," he said. "There are no problems. The deal is done and he will be registered for Europe."

Rush, who won five championship medals and one European Cup-winners' medal at Liverpool, will not be eligible for the second leg of Newcastle's European Cup qualifying tie against Croatia Zagreb in ten days' time. Dalglish's team will take a slender lead to Croatia after their controversial 2-1 victory at St James' Park on Wednesday night.

## Tiger tries to shoot from hip but misfires

The time has come for Woods and his supporters to accept that nobody is bigger than the game of golf itself

So, it turns out that we have to ask ourselves: are our hips "firing" correctly? According to his coach, Butch Harmon, on telly on Thursday night, Tiger Woods' failure to astonish in the first round at US PGA Championship this week was all down to this interesting problem — some sort of ballistic malfunction of the pelvis.

We guessed what Butch was talking about, having seen many a hero in the same situation in westerns. Tiger took dead-eye aim, you see, but instead of his hips going "bang, bang", they went "click, click". And it's always a disaster when that happens. While his audience gasped "Oh no" and gripped one another in alarm, Tiger looked down at his non-firing body in dismay and click-clicked again. "Well, darn it, if my hips ain't jammed," he said.

Everyone wants Tiger Woods to be a consistently brilliant player. There is no room for disagreement about that. We so avidly

want his hips to fire correctly that if his hands also detonate and his feet explode, that's fine. Woods is an inspiring fellow whose follow-through is so vigorously elastic that his torso ends up pointing in the opposite direction from his feet. As for the length of his shots, it's as though an athlete suddenly halved the 100 metres record, or a horse jumped 8R 6in. Golf-course designers now weep at midnight at their drawing-boards. "I don't know where to put the bunkers any more," they wail.

Lumbering him with the "I am Tiger Woods" paragon stuff was unfair, though understandable. He's handsome, young, a perfect racial composite and, moreover, never says boo to a goose. All this is marketing, though, and we should not be distracted by it. No, the reason that people are gawping about Tiger is that, when he assailed the Masters so magnificently this spring, he not only excelled personally but offered an insane hope to millions. With a Merlin-like

LYNNE TRUSS



coddle at his side and with his magic Excalibur clubs, he went forth with a pure heart and, over 72 holes, appeared to conquer golf itself.

It seems silly to think of it now, of course. Nobody beats golf for more than five minutes, but for one brief, shining moment — as Tiger

strode up the 18th at Augusta, waving to fans — it really looked as though a human being could challenge this annoying game, wrestle it and finally pose with a foot on its neck. Here, revealed, was the Pete Sampras of the birdie, the best beyond argument.

No one will ever be the Pete Sampras of golf, though: there are too many factors to control. Your hips may be firing like Exocets, but now your eye's packed up and the wind is gusting right to left. No wonder the characteristic look on a professional golfer's face is "How did that happen?" mixed with "Oh well, think of the money." When you take full account of what Nick Faldo has been through, he actually looks quite cheerful.

Tiger's been looking a bit grumpy lately, but you can't blame him. At the Open Championship this summer, they put up a lanky banner that read "Troon takes Tigers", but it wasn't Troon that fought back. It was golf. Now everything is quite normal again, with no Once and Future King nonsense, just a man with a stick against the Almighty. Tiger may have astonishing skills and everyone adores him, but golf doesn't bow to anybody and that's a fact.

Winged Foot wonders, page 47

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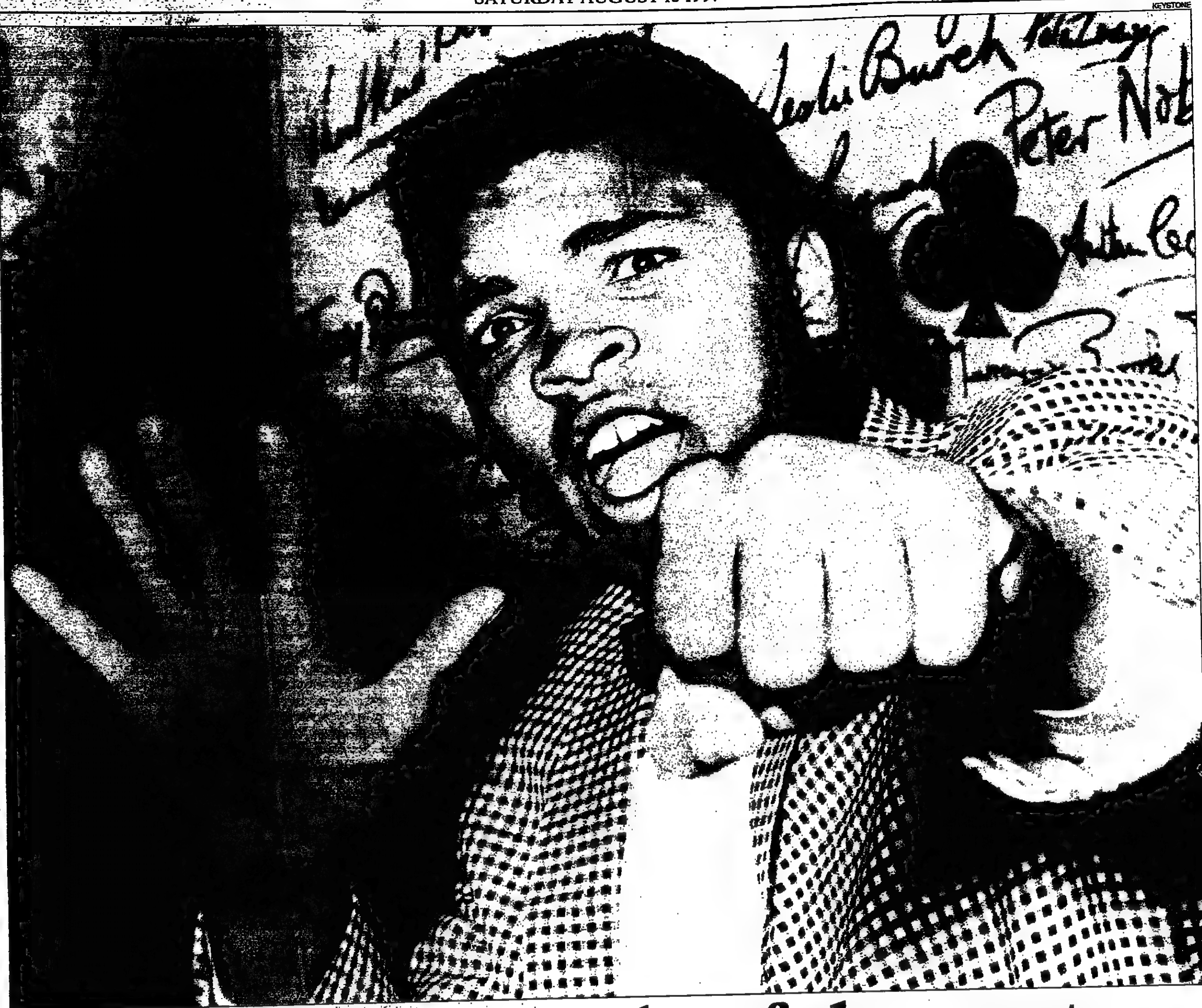
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## The Greatest's sale of the century

Muhammad Ali was not only king of the ring - he was the sportsman of the millennium, as a £1.5 million sale of his memorabilia shows, Sri Sen writes

As soon as we reach the next century, sports writers around the world will be moved to consider who was the sports person of the millennium. The media will, almost certainly, let the public decide and some impressive contenders will enter the lists, such as Muhammad Ali, Pelé, Paavo Nurmi, Jesse Owens, Emil Zatopek, Martina Navratilova, Mildred 'Babe' Didrikson and, from earlier times when much of the world was coloured pink, W.G. Grace and Captain Barclay Allardice.

It would be surprising, however, if Ali did not remain The Greatest. A collection of Ali memorabilia worth £1.5 million, which will be exhibited by Christie's in London from August 27-31, strengthens the great man's claim to a place at the top of the millennium's pyramid of sportsmen. The collection is owned by Ronnie Paloger, of

California, who says: "People who are experts in the field of memorabilia have got goosebumps seeing my exhibition. They are just in awe."

In the same way that archaeologists unearthed the splendour of the trappings buried with the ancient kings of Egypt, so, too, Paloger has revived the golden years of the heavyweight kings which lay buried in the 1960s and 1970s.

Particularly important is a little-known contract that Ali signed to meet Frazier in his first fight after returning from his nearly four-year exile. In fact, he did not meet Frazier but Jerry Quarry, but the choice of Frazier as the first opponent is significant when one considers that Tyson chose to meet a no-hoper, Peter McNeeley, in his first contest after coming out of prison.

Paloger says: "I grew up in the 1960s and I'm a product of the 1960s, so Ali was my hero. Mickey Mantle was my

baseball hero and Ali was even bigger than that. He was a major hero to me and my generation. We cared for him."

"When I got into the memorabilia stage, collecting Ali stuff, I was ready to focus on one person. I was able to do something with one identity, because in baseball you could follow 100 years and thousands of people, and to me Ali was not only an unbelievable athlete but an unbelievable human being. He stood for something, for everybody. A man of courage. He stood up for his convictions and suffered greatly for it. He crossed all social, racial and economic lines. Ali not only fought but had something to say. This is unique, compared to the athletes of

today, because basically they don't say anything that impacts on society or on anything but themselves. Ali is one of the greatest Americans to have ever come out of our country."

How many people would have given up their title for three and a half years and lost millions and millions of dollars? And the attacks that he took from the press without due process? He was stripped of his title within two hours of taking a stance against the Vietnam War. Unheard of. And it happened in the United States."

The Ali collection, which will be sold on October 19 in Los Angeles by Christie's, contains

3,000 items, and the 278-page catalogue, documented and set out chronologically, gives you a complete pictorial view of the boxer's career. All the personal artefacts were acquired from promoters or members of his entourage. Many items came from the collection of Drew Bundini Brown, Ali's cornerman and cheer-leader who coined the phrase: "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee."

The pieces, collected with the diligence of an Otaku (Japanese devotee of modern memorabilia), range from Ali's first amateur boots to the last World Championship robe he wore when he regained the title from Leon Spinks in 1978 to become the first man to win the world heavyweight title three times;

from Cassius Clay's first Golden Gloves trophy to the Muhammad Ali D-Con Roach traps. If you have a ticket from a fight between Ali and Al "Blue" Lewis at Croke Park, Dublin, hold on to it; it could be worth a fortune, because there is only one known to exist. The white boots with the lightning bolts on the ankles, worn for a fight with Foreman, are valued at \$20,000 to \$30,000. There are other big-fight shoes at about \$10,000.

The centrepiece of the sale is the magnificent gown worn by Ali for the "Rumble in the Jungle" against Foreman in Zaire in 1974. It has no estimated price and took the collector five years to acquire. Paloger even has the handwritten list of journalists' forecasts about the outcome of the fight. There, alongside Norman Mailer and Budd Schulberg, is the name of Colin Hart of *The Sun*. All three said Ali would win.

Paloger's favourite pieces are

the handwritten letters of the young Cassius Clay. "That Rome Bound [Olympic Games, 1960] letter in which he said he is the best in the United States is unbelievable," Paloger says. "It showed the power of the young man's mind and his confidence in his game plan. The vision of what he wanted to be: champion and the greatest. And he became the greatest."

There will, of course, be many who think their heroes greater. Nurmi, the father of distance running, broke 22 world records from 1,500 metres up to 20 kilometres, won nine gold medals and three silver in three Olympics; Pelé played in two World Cups and in 1,363 first-class matches scored 1,281 goals; Owens took four gold medals in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin in sprints and the long jump and, a year earlier, at

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Olga Korbut transformed gymnastics from a minority sport

Only a handful of athletes have ever achieved the public acclaim, or perfectionism, of Ali

## Winning is the only thing that matters

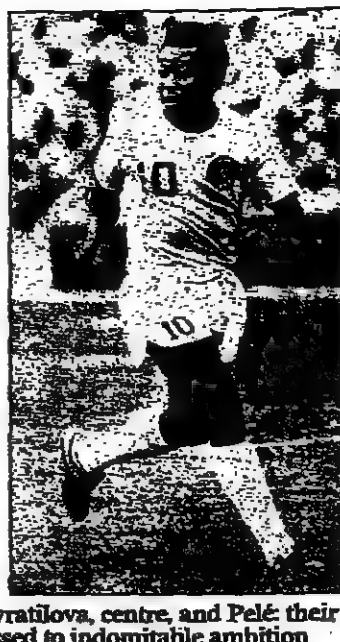
If acclaim reflects sporting worth, then Muhammad Ali and Pelé, the former boxer and the former footballer, are supreme. Their profiles would be recognised in more parts of the world than those of the Pope or the President of the United States.

Pelé, now Brazil's Minister for Sport, did not have to destroy, or be destroyed by, anyone else to earn his laurels. A two-day truce was declared in the war between Nigeria and Biafra while both sides watched him play. Red Chinese frontier guards left their posts to greet him in Hong Kong; he had audiences with two Popes, five emperors, ten kings, 110 heads of state. Born close to poverty, a World Cup winner at 17 and then twice more, as well as the scorer of 1,321 goals, Pelé was the consummate athlete and remains the ambassador for his "beautiful game".

Some man. But where do sporting women rate? As the World's Athletic Championships in Athens last week reminded us, women were only allowed to adorn the arena for the first half of the modern Olympic century. Yet four stand apart: Mary Peters won just one Olympic gold, but converted that into trying to unite Northern Ireland. Martina Navratilova, serving and volleying as close to the standard of man as any female has, claimed 167 tennis singles titles. Olga Korbut transformed gymnastics from a minority sport to one which millions of children aspire to, albeit with a poodle-style which ended the period of womanly grace on the floor and the beam.

However, it is Irena Szewinska who was the first lady of sport. Born in Leningrad, to Polish parents, she competed in five Olympics from 1964 to 1980, won seven medals, from 100 metres to 400 metres to long jump, and still serves today as a member of the Women's Commission of International Athletics.

Moreover, masking extreme stubbornness with feminine serenity, Szewinska disproved the theory that an athlete cannot also be a mother and a home keeper, and at the same time be a forecaster



Emil Zatopek, left, Martina Navratilova, centre, and Pelé: their exceptional talent was harnessed to indomitable ambition

employed by the National Institute for Economics in Warsaw.

Such people do leave their mark. Roger Bannister was knighted for breaking the barrier of the four-minute mile in 1954, rather than for his subsequent work as a neurologist. Dick Fosbury, an engineer, literally reversed the way generations of people approach the high jump and changed, through example, the mechanics and the perspective of an international sport.

Emil Zatopek changed my own perspective, even though we met 25 years after his incomparable feat of winning the 5,000-metre, 10,000-metre and 20-mile marathon races — all within eight days — at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics.

He appeared to run in agony, head rolling, tongue out, face

grimacing, arms flailing. But this indomitable man, standing up against the Soviet tanks in his beloved Prague in 1968, was stripped of his lieutenant-colonel rank and sent to sweep the streets.

Nine years later, still ostracised, he was allowed to be a guest at a banquet in Prague, along with other Olympians. He showed unbroken spirit. He sang English songs extremely loudly and, of his sport, commented: "Today, the athlete is not an athlete. He's the centre of a team — doctors, scientists, coaches and so on. Sometimes I run like a mad dog, but it was very simple, it was out of myself."

Daley Thompson, arguably the finest all-round athlete and a

decathlete unbeaten in his prime, similarly said: "It's going out there and finding out what you've got." From a broken home, after a hyperactive childhood, Thompson mastered ten sporting disciplines and the psychology of winning. "If I have a cold, I don't sneeze," he insisted. "It would let others know I was not at my best."

Harnessing his balance and timing to thoroughbred horses was Lester Piggott, who won his first race at the age of 12 and his last when he was nearing 60. He also claimed 30 classics, among his more than 4,000 victories in 26 countries. Obsessed, leading a life of continual near-starvation and dehydration to maintain his racing weight, he was better able to communicate with half-fame ani-

mals than with other humans.

Winning was natural to Carl Lewis, who won nine Olympic gold medals for running and jumping. He emulated Jesse Owens, the black American who won four golds at the 1936 Berlin Olympics under the gaze of Hitler. Lewis lacked Owens' humility, but moved with the grace of a gazelle.

At cricket, no one has yet bettered Gary Sobers. With bat, ball or wicketkeeper's pads, he excelled for Barbados, the West Indies and Nottinghamshire, for whom he struck those immaculate sixes in an over against Glamorgan.

Jack Nicklaus similarly excelled with golf clubs. For more than three decades, capturing 20 majors, he elevated himself in American society — a society which pays Michael Jordan, the basketball icon, \$40 million for one season.

Nicklaus is now challenged by the young Tiger Woods, whom Nicklaus reckons will eclipse his records — if he sustains the hunger and the will.

Longevity remains paramount. Juan Manuel Fangio, five-time world motor racing champion in the 1950s, drove when the human component dominated the machine. "I felt the car entrusted to me was a living thing," he observed. And he stayed a line as close to the edge of disaster as man dared.

Al Oerter was the ultimate Olympian. Four times he went to the Games and although he never held the discus world record, four times he won the gold medal. On the third occasion, in Tokyo in 1964, he devised a "surgical collar" out of a towel tied to a leather strap, to defy doctors' orders. With two discs out of place and a torn rib cartilage, he explained: "These are the Olympics. You die for them."

Footballer, fixated, Oerter in 1980 tried a comeback. He had twice risen to a leading position in industry and he took lessons from a young ballerina who suggested he lacked something in technique. "You search for perfection," he said. "She told me I was not getting the best out of my body movement."

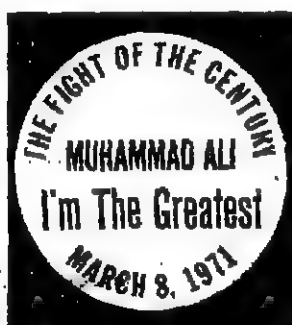
ROB HUGHES

## He floated like a butterfly, but he stung like a bee

Continued from page 1

Ann Arbor, Michigan, he equalled or broke six world records in the space of 45 minutes: Zatopek won the 5,000 metres, 10,000 metres and the marathon in the 1952 Olympics; Navratilova won nine Wimbledon titles; Dikrikson excelled in athletics, basketball and golf; Allardice walked 1,000 miles round Newmarket Heath in 1,000 hours in 1801 and was paid £10,000, which would be about £200,000 today. Grace, of course, was the most recognisable figure in late Victorian times after Gladstone.

None of these heroes was as dominant a world personality as Ali during their careers and after retirement. One glance at Thomas Hauser's superb biography, *Muhammad Ali, His Life and Times* (on which I have leaned for reference), shows that almost anyone who was anyone had something to say about Ali, good or bad, nothing indifferent. Even though he



"I'm the greatest" badge for the 1971 fight v Frazier

suffers from Parkinson's disease, Ali is far from finished. "I ain't dead. I'm just getting started," he says. "When I was boxing, I used to get up at six and run. Now I get up at five and pray."

Ali has been out of the ring for 16 years and yet today there is no heavyweight to rival him. Indeed, no heavyweight contest these days is complete without an appearance by the

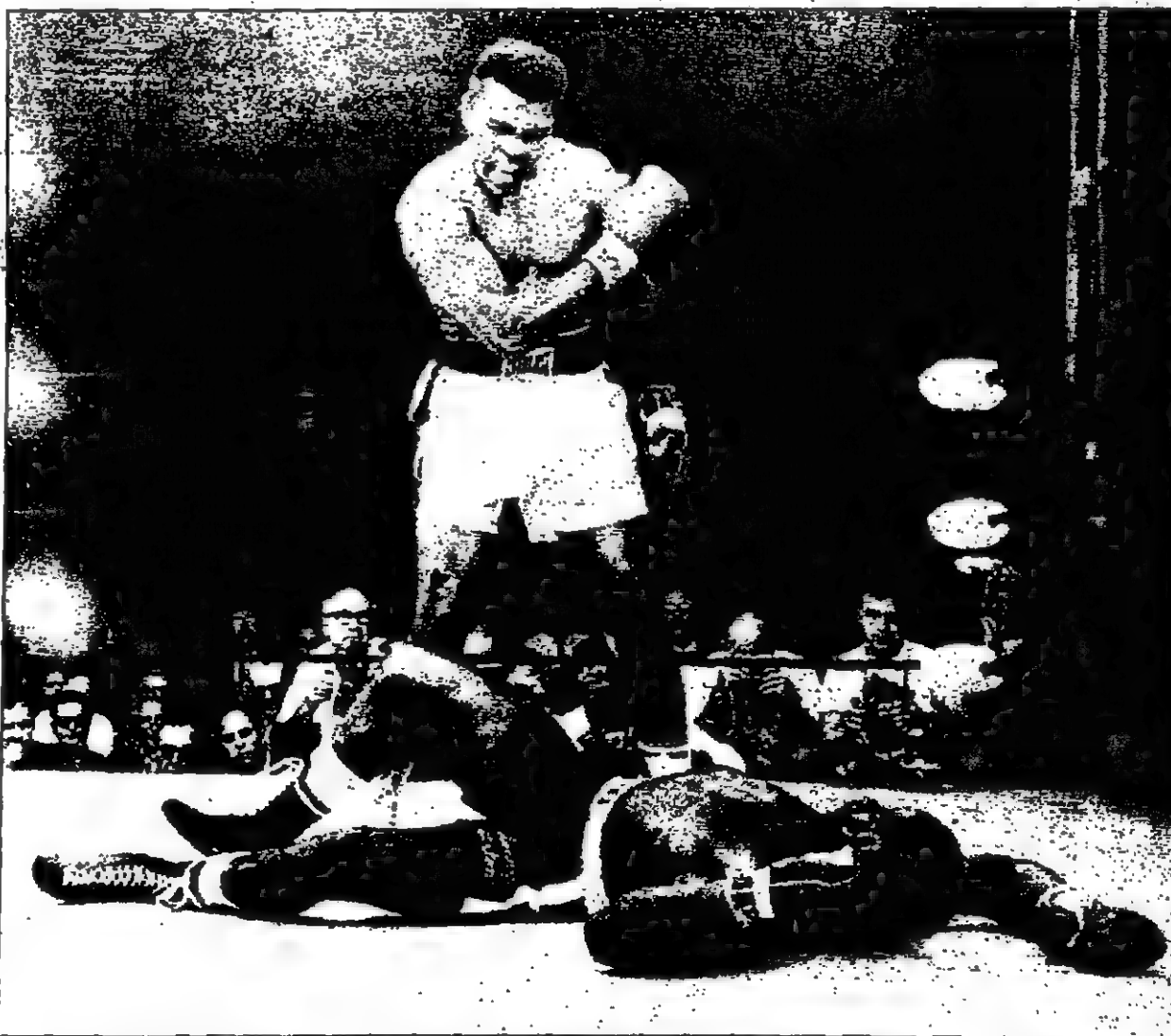
great man. The crowd rises as one when he comes to an event and climbs into the ring and raises his hands as of old and walks slowly over to the contestants to wish them well. The twinkle in his eyes but a brave smile relieves the fears of the crowd for him. The squiggle of the smile is like the flourish of a signature — that endows him with courage.

He is still the yardstick for courage, performance, endurance and success in the ring. If Mike Tyson wants to be considered the greatest he has to be measured against Ali. Tyson and all the other leading heavyweights can thank Ali for the multimillion-dollar cheques they receive for their fights. It was Ali who set the standard of payment for heavyweight championships. Ali was paid \$5,450,000 for his fight with George Foreman in 1974. He made far more than \$60 million by the end of his career, which started in 1960 and lasted 21 years.

He was the first heavyweight to win the world title three times. He lost only five of his 61 contests, but he avenged three of those defeats. He faced the most formidable foes in the world in Sonny Liston, Joe Frazier (three times), Foreman, the US Army when he refused to be inducted to fight in Vietnam, and Parkinson's. He outsmarted them all, even Parkinson's. "God gave me Parkinson's to show me I'm just a man like everybody else," he said. "To show me I've got human frailties like everyone else, because that's all I am, a man. If I die, I'll have no regrets. I have tried to live a good life and do the right thing. I'm not scared to die because I have made my peace."

Ali was a demi-god full of devilment, a clown and a ringmaster. He was the king of communication. The press hated and loved him in turn. They castigated him mercilessly when he refused to join the army to fight in Vietnam; they sat at his feet and lapped up his words when he sounded off before and after fights. He was never boring, always funny, clever, outrageous. He said before his first fight with Frazier in 1971: "Fifteen referees, I want 15 referees at this fight because there ain't no one man who can keep up with the pace I'm gonna set... On that night they'll be watching everywhere. England, France, Italy, Egypt and Israel will declare a 45-minute truce. Even Red China and Formosa. Not since time began has there been a night like this."

Ed Schuyler, the highly respected boxing writer of Associated Press, said: "There has never been a heavyweight champion, or maybe a superstar athlete, who was more accessible to the media than Ali. He could make you believe anything. Once he said he was going to levitate. Then



Posed photograph for the end of the heavyweight championship fight on May 25, 1965, in Lewiston, Maine, when Ali defeated Sonny Liston

he went up in the air. And you said, 'My god, the man is levitating'. And you knew he couldn't, but there it is. If you couldn't write about Ali, you couldn't write. He made us look good."

On the serious side, his words had a simple poetry and power to move black and white America. He brought hope to the pacifist movement in his country when it needed it most during the Vietnam war. He de-intellectualised political ideas and intellectualised human interpretation and was sought after by campuses and political leaders who opposed the war. Ali told his detractors: "You can't condemn me for wanting peace. If you do, you condemn peace itself. A rooster crows when it sees the light. Put him in the dark and he'll never crow. I've seen the light and I'm crowing."

Ted Kennedy said: "My brother Bob hollered Muhammad's resistance to the Vietnam War. It was a commitment they shared and I think Muhammad's action contributed enormously to the debate about whether the United States should be in Vietnam and galvanised some of his admirers to join protests against the war for the first time."

Ali dominated the 1960s and the 1970s in the ring and the 1980s and 1990s outside it, and



Gloves, left, worn by Ali in 1967. Ronnie Paloger, collector, with Ali, above. "He was a major hero to me and my generation. We cared for him... Ali is one of the greatest Americans to have come out of our country"

his presence will be undiminished when the decade ends. All the icons of his time — John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Malcolm X, John Lennon — are all dead and are difficult to recall by those who did not live in their time.

If the speeches of the Kennedys and the mobile face and curves of Marilyn Monroe cannot be readily remembered without the help of old footage

and old movies, Ali remains fresh in our mind. He was more than a king, he was a king emperor, a pharaoh, whose achievements would make future generations marvel.

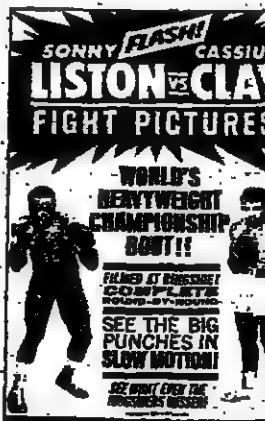
The appeal to young people of the recent award-winning film about the fight between him and Foreman in Zaire in 1974, entitled *When We Were Kings*, underlines his popular-

ity today. As one 28-year-old said: "It is a film that tells you something about yourself and not just about people on the screen."

"Ali is like an artefact of a culture where everything considered important had a meaning. Today's sportsmen have little to say. They exist to sell designer labels."

The world will not see the like of Ali for another hundred

Robe, above, worn by Ali for his fight against George Foreman in 1974



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Once they were just for men but those pinstripes are now staple

# Pinstripes are the business

Once the word pin-stripes conjured up images of successful businessmen and Conservative politicians — men who wanted to appear in control. Those days are gone, and now the look has become a fashion staple for both sexes, whether they're putting on a professional front in the office or wanting to be smart yet casual out of hours.

It's not just the clientele that has changed: shops are now bursting with dozens of innovative styles in conventional needle and chalk stripes that mix the conservative with the modern. Which means there for every modern day woman, there is a wide range of Miss Money Penny pencil skirts, masculine trouser suits and sensible separates to wear every day of the week, from the Monday morning board meet-

ing to the casual yet smart  
lunch at the weekend.

It is a style that allows women the freedom to experiment — a chance to emulate the chaps in a way that is modern and sassy, but not overbearing. It also allows women to get away with slightly more in the office: shorter skirts, for example, are more acceptable if they're made of charcoal-grey ticking, as are trousers if they are sharply cut in traditional striped serge fabrics.

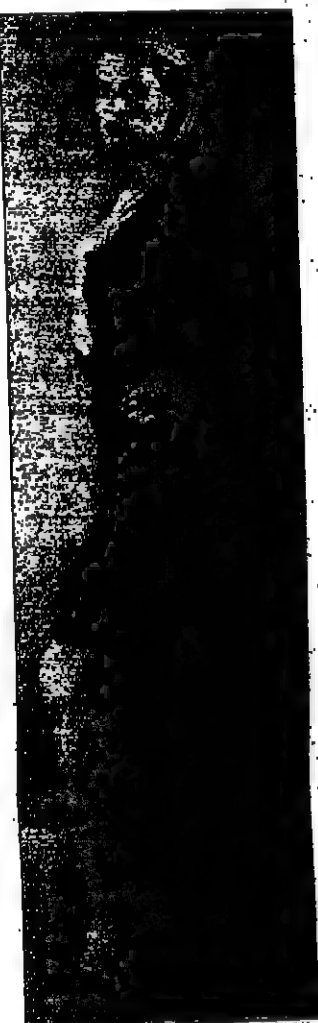
striped serge radrics. At the international fashion shows for this season Ralph Lauren showed an androgynous collection of mannish-worsted suiting in pinstripes; Gucci also updated the Eighties power-dressing looks in more feminine dresses and suits. Subsequently, many high-street labels have followed suit, producing basic tailored skirt and trouser shapes in pinstripes for their autumn collections. Warehouse, for example, has a selection of workaday pinstripes that are modern enough to be worn at any time of day.

If you cannot find the time or the patience to go high-street shopping, there are always mail-order catalogues. Next Directory (0345 100500) has a couple of sharply tailored pinstriped trousersuits in single or double-breasted styles, as well as a selection of matching pinstriped essentials. The La Redoute catalogue (0500 777777) has some inexpensive tapered city styles, including a sleeveless dress, tapered trousers and a tailored slimline skirt while Frozemans (0345 500100) has a pinstriped selection in its Working Wardrobe

The best looks for the office are neither too sexy, nor too short, but smart, chic and simple. A lambswool or cashmere top, or a fitted blouse, are ideal to complement the look, with either smart, dark heels or smart shoes.

Wherever you work, whether it is from home, from an office or on the road, the new pinstriped suit will be ideal: the smart choice for the modern Nineties woman.

HEATH BROWN



**ABOVE:** Red cashmere wrap top, £175, N. Peel, 37 Burlington Arcade, W1 (0171-493 5378). Grey pinstriped skirt, £35, Warehouse (0171-437 7101). Mock snakeskin aride-toe shoes, £225, Gina, 189 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 2932).



**ABOVE:** Chocolate fine-ribbed belted cardigan, £24.99; Jeffrey Rogers, The Plaza (01923 474400). Chocolate pinstriped trousers, £79.95, Planet, Harrods, SW1; Selfridges, Oxford Street, W1; Kendalls, Deansgate, Manchester (0161-800 8022).



**ABOVE:** Cream stretch shirt, £24.99, Jeffrey Rogers, as before. Dark blue pinstriped trousers, £595 (as part of suit), Dolce & Gabbana Harvey Nichols, SW1 (0171-235 5000); Toffee shoes, £79.99, Ravel (0171-631 0224)

Photographs by **Richard Burns**. Hair and make-up by **Sally Kvælheim** for Jo Hanstord. Styling by **Amandip Uppal**.

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Mulberry (0171-  
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**RIGHT:** PVC  
briefcase with  
cotton lining,  
internal pockets  
and concealed  
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Bhs branches  
0171-262 3288



Toffee shirt, £24.99, Jeffrey Rogers, as before.  
Navy pinstriped skirt, £49, Benetton (0171-647 4200)  
Shoes, £44.99, Ravel, as before

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# Step by step to a far prettier terrace



Before: the problem stretch of terrace awaiting attention

Stephen Anderton shows how he solved a back-of-the-house problem

I sometimes think how wonderful it would be to have a long, lean-to conservatory stretching across the back of the house. And then I do a double-think. One, because it would cost from £15,000 to £40,000 depending on quality, and two, because I could not bear to invest so much in a conservatory which did not get the evening sun.

The back of the house faces east, which is a good aspect for a conservatory — not too hot, perfect for plants and for breakfast — but I would rather spend money on a summer-house facing west at the bottom of the garden. So I am left with an east-facing terrace which is about 30ft long and 9ft wide, with a lift drop on to the lawn.

What to do with it? The terrace, at one end of which is a kitchen extension, is paved with square, well-weathered concrete slabs laid in straight rows. Rectangular slabs are always so much easier to make look good but,

to make a worthwhile difference to this terrace, I would have to re-lay it, ideally in new paving, and for a morning-only terrace it really is not worth the effort or expense. So I am making the best of it.

My first move has been to take up a couple of rows of paving at the kitchen end so that I can have something growing on the terrace. *Abutilon x sunense* went in last spring, to hide the rainwater pipes in the corner, and is now 12ft tall and doing its job perfectly. It is full of *Clematis viticella* and climbing its skirts is purple *Geranium 'Anne Folkard'*, alongside *Hydrangea paniculata* and *Choisya ternata*.

Below the terrace was a mean little border — 1ft deep and 30ft long — of lavender, hybrid tea roses and pink-striped field bindweed, which was neither use nor ornament. Instead, I have dug out some lawn (and most of the bindweed) to make a border 7ft deep. I want it to have plenty of substance to act like a hedge



After: Stephen Anderton looks out on the finished job — one of incorporating a too-narrow, east-facing terrace into an attractive stepped feature

of colour under the terrace. The border runs north-south, and although the house gradually robs it of sunlight after about 1pm in summer, it is light enough for most purposes.

A bigger problem is the buffeting from southeasterly

winds which push plants forwards. Herbaceous plants can develop a lean away from the wall, so I shall try a couple of tricks to solve this. The first is to grow a few dense shrubs at the back of the border, which can be allowed, despite the narrow terrace, to bulge

backwards on to the paving and break up the exposed edge. There is the small purple *Pittosporum 'Tom Thumb'*, *Rosa 'Penelope'* and box.

The box is planted to flank a set of steps which pierces the border at its halfway point, creating a descent from the

back door, across the terrace and down again on to the lawn. Previously, there was a little step 1ft wide from terrace to lawn. But I have made new 7ft-wide steps, to make a visual plinth for the door. The flanking hedges of the broad-leaved *Buxus sempervirens* 'Rotundi-

folia' will be clipped into fat, joggling sausages.

These steps have to drop only 1ft over a distance of 7ft (the depth of the border), which means they must be shallow — never the best arrangement for steps. I put in only two steps, but made a

## WEEKEND TIPS

■ Trim the faded flower stalks off lavender bushes and hedges and pinch out the strongest subsequent shoots to encourage bushiness. Avoid cutting hard into old shoots, because they are reluctant to sprout again.

■ Sow winter spinach in rows 4in apart, for cropping from November to spring.

■ Plant new strawberry plants in soil well-enriched with manure or old compost.

■ Begin cutting out old wood from early flowering rambler roses, such as 'Albentine'.

■ Give liquid feed to late-flowering clematis, such as 'Jackmannii', every two weeks, and water weekly in hot weather.

third platform down at lawn level. Or, rather, 2in above it: I allowed the thickness of the paving slabs to show above the lawn, to give a clean edge from the fairly rolling grass.

Unfortunately, this garden has a sideways cross fall, with the result that my long terrace is 6in above the lawn at one end and 16in above at the other. The border planting disguises the drop in summer, but in winter it will always be visible.

Sometimes it is worth levelling up a cross fall by regrading the existing soil or importing topsoil. In my garden this would be a big job and it would be expensive to have it done. So I shall trick it out by planting large, heavy evergreens at the low end of the border and beyond to wrap around the end of the house and give the feeling of stability and weight, even if the topography wants to deny it.

I might, just might, put a wooden balustrade-rail fence at the back of the border, too, to add further weight and protect the border plants from those blustery winds.

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## Whatever their size, front gardens reflect their owners' personality



## Putting on a bold front

Front gardens in towns and villages are remarkable things. They are everybody's little patch of contention, and yet what goes on there needs to relate not only to the style of the house itself but to the street as well.

The wonder is that within those limits front gardens can be so different. For me, the pleasure of gardening is partly to be found in seeing how people's ideas and approaches differ.

Even the strip of poor soil between someone's house or garden wall and the pavement beyond can be startlingly varied. This hot, dry, little space can still be a source of pleasure both to gardener and passer-by. Take a look in summer at the ways in which people in one particular Essex village have dressed these unpromising strips and you will enjoy the sheer variety of planting.

Start with that run of ancient timber houses tight on to the street, separated from each other by 6ft flint walls. The walls are strong and plain and need no adornment, although they might bear a patch or two of yellow biting stonecrop and ivy-leaved toadflax. A streak of yellow shows above, from *Rosa 'Golden Showers'* on the other side.

Then there is a grander house, four-square and with a strip of garden under its windows behind swags of painted chain. Here there are mixed, self-seeding wallflowers for spring, and for summer, against the white-plastered walls, ranks of hollyhocks and a few Madonna lilies. It is all very traditional and effortless. Barley grows among the hollyhocks, fallen from passing farm vehicles.

A simpler house of black weather-boarding has the works, but all in baskets. Window boxes and planters of petunias and pelargoniums in bright colours are swagged together with trails of ivy.

The people next door have been reading glossy magazines. Two ochre-patterned Chinese jars flank the door, sitting on a plain cobbled strip. 'White Triumphator' tulips in spring, looking wonderful for weeks on end, are followed by pale pink, trailing, ivy-leaved geraniums and nothing else. It is very chic — but nothing succeeds like simplicity.

Around a corner there is one of those houses which have grown in delicious asymmetry for hundreds of years. Its garden is the same. An aged topiary bird looks down from the garden, watched over in turn by a tall, 'modern' eucalyptus tree. Double scarlet geraniums sit cheerfully in the pavement strip, and there are bush roses behind a low retaining wall. Part of the wall is made of weathered limestone fragments and into it have been built 3in clay plant pots, tilted back at an angle and housing purple aubrietias for spring.

Another timber-framed house follows, with unpainted plaster and a gloriously faded, gentle aspect. Between that and the pavement it has a simple strip of pink valerian (where will valerian not grow?) and there is a clipped winter-flowering *Viburnum tinus* for punctuation.

Hot and dry by the door, a rosemary and choisya grow with roots just a few crazy inches apart, in absolute and intimate embrace. Such passion has no

time for correct planting distances. In contrast, across the road is a case of rampant cottage gardening, the gable end tight to the pavement, but gloriously encrusted in *Rosa 'Albentine'* top to bottom, with clipped box flanking the door.

On the main street is a long frontage of creamy parterring and tan timbers. It has a bigger, yard-wide strip in which grow hollyhocks, casting tall, flying-saucer shadows on the plasterwork, with generous blocks of *Rosa 'Iceberg'* and a vibrant pink climbing rose around the door.

The Big House has steps to the door and a fine white portal, and calls for no more than wisteria trained all over its dark brick facade, the grey rope-like trunks looping backwards and forwards in dodo fashion at the foot of the wall.

Finally, there is a little wild triangle of land. It is houseless but it must belong to someone. It supports only long grass behind a modest flint wall. A few seedlings of yellow rape lodge at the wall's foot.

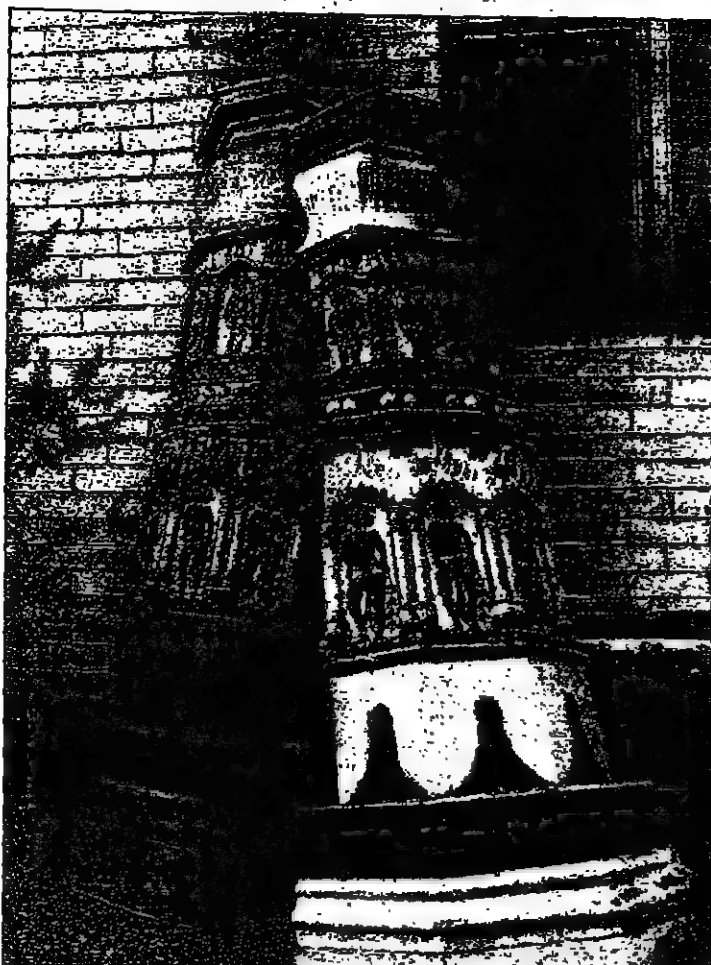
But struggling through the grass and nosing over the wall is an old, pink, moss rose, smothered in the small, striped, wild pink bindweed. The two are made for each other in a wild garden.

The attraction of all these is that every effect is different. Each is a personal response to the problem of what to grow in the difficult, dry and often dusty strip beside a pavement. *Vive la différence*, I say.

STEPHEN ANDERTON



## Jane Owen visits one of fashion's original eccentrics, creating an aerial garden near Tower Bridge



Pillars of society: Indian-style ornaments give an exotic flavour

## Moving tale of a designer in bloom

ME AND MY GARDEN: ZANDRA RHODES

Zandra Rhodes, whose frocks sell for about £6,000 apiece, is resident from head to toe in one of her colourful designs, complete with bat wings, in her aerial garden.

An east wind is whipping round her extensive terrace, on the top floor of a 1960s warehouse near Tower Bridge, London. She has a mobile garden — all of it planted in huge terracotta pots. When she moved here, last September, her

garden had to be hoisted up the outside. Camellias, roses, herbs, brom — the lot.

Her plants were the trickiest to move, but the ornaments were the easiest: an 8ft long Chac Mool, a sort of reclining Mexican-style figure, and some brightly coloured Indian-style polystyrene pillars from John Aspinall's gambling club. The only problem with the ornaments came when they blew away and landed in the



A mobile garden: Zandra Rhodes has lovingly nurtured her plants in huge terracotta pots which make a striking display on the terrace of her home near Tower Bridge

council estate opposite. Rhodes had lived for 25 years in a tall house in Notting Hill, in west London. There, when she wasn't whirling the world's catwalks, she taught herself to garden against all the odds. Her garden received no sunlight, had no soil and suffered from damp, but she created a second retreat of ivy and ferns with a herb and rose terrace at second-floor level. Her horticultural knowledge comes from *Gardener's*

*Question Time* tapes which she takes travelling. Rhodes is transforming the warehouse into the Zandra Rhodes Museum of Fashion and Textiles where thousands of modern frocks and fabrics will be on show to the public, but she has found time to sketch plans for the terrace garden. She hopes to build a 10ft brick wall to protect the plants and give privacy, and the John Aspinall pillars will make a colonnade interspersed with pots.

The floor will probably be of gravel. The door to the terrace has fierce messages about keeping the pots watered and replacing the bubble-wrap insulation when it blows away. Like many gardeners, she worries whether her plants will be watered enough in her absence.

Rhodes intends to plant a Kiftgate, the overwhelming creamy-white rose which originated in the Gloucestershire garden of that name, which will

grow up the front of the stark building. That may be joined by an *Acridia kolomikta*, the vine whose leaves develop startling pink and white tips as they mature.

She hopes to extend the garden into the museum with small indoor Japanese-style beds lit from above by skylights — plant wells, as Zandra calls them. Around the walls glazed arrow slits will provide light for more plants. The decor inside is predictably Zandra

Rhodes: vivid reds and dazzling golds, calishing with pinks and orange, and great swags of gorgeous fabrics.

On a wall, in the midst of all this excellent bad taste, is an exquisite botanical watercolour of a stinging nettle in flower. The style is Dürer, the artist a young student called Zandra Rhodes. Her interest in plants has been with her since art school, a startling foil to her exoticism.

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## GARDEN ANSWERS



STEPHEN ANDERTON  
replies to readers' letters

**Q** My three-year-old 'Prinz Handjery' sycamore made its green-and-plum leaves as usual in spring but now they are going brown and falling. There are still some sound buds on the tree. What is the problem? — C. Sarson, Rugby, Warwickshire.

**A** Young sycamores, especially the fancy ones such as the purplish *Acer pseudoplatanus* 'Prinz Handjery' and the peachy 'Brilliantissimum' which get planted in warm, sheltered places, can suffer so much from aphids that the leaves are sucked dry and fall prematurely. After three years, neither drought nor the wet June could cause this problem. Had the leaves died but remained on the tree, it would be much more of a worry: that would mean the tree itself was dead. I expect your tree will recover next year, even if it does not regain a full canopy this year. Look for aphids, especially beneath the leaves.

**Q** I have a 15-year-old prostrate *Juniperus communis* 'Repanda', which is 10ft across and impeding the driveway. Could I take a foot off all round? It is beginning to get a bit lumpy in the middle, which I presume is because of its age. — Miss B.R. Masters, St Albans, Hertfordshire.

**A** All junipers start to get rather lumpy and craggy in middle age. Hard pruning sometimes produces new shoots from old wood, or from the base, but it is unpredictable and the plant will never regain the trimness of youth. If you need to take only 1ft off, do it by nibbling back some of the branches; take some branches back by a couple of feet (if you can do it invisibly) so that light is admitted and the plant

thickens its growth further back. Do it now. Next year you could take off the bits you left sticking out this year. After that, do a little frequently, two or three times a year, so that hard pruning is unnecessary.

**Q** After numerous attempts we have at last got the Scottish flame flower, *Tropaeolum speciosum*, to establish itself in our garden from pieces of rhizome. In its second year it has reached 5ft into a hedge of honeysuckle and dematis. But instead of being scarlet the flowers are a drab yellow. Why? — B. Clarke, Oxford.

**A** I cannot help thinking that this is a case of mistaken identity. There is no yellow form of this glorious climber, but there are yellow or yellowish species of *tropaeolum* (nasturtium) which are perennial. I have sometimes seen the climber *Eccremocarpus* taken for Scottish flame flower, and it does indeed have a drab, orangey-yellow form, which is popular at the moment. But this, of course, has tendrils at the ends of its leaves, like a pea, whereas the *tropaeolum* just winds itself around things. The flame flower has a much more succulent, running root, like bindweed, and is hard to mistake, except with bindweed or alstroemeria. If you really have the right plant, and it continues to be yellow, then either it is sick or it is something very special. Usually, when the plant is lime-sick, it does not grow at all, so I do not see the yellowing of your plant being caused by lime.

**Write to: GARDEN ANSWERS, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. We regret that any enclosures cannot be returned.**



Fay Armitage, a volunteer gardener, gave up her job as wardrobe mistress at Her Majesty's Theatre, London, for less stressful work in the grounds of the Royal Pavilion, Brighton

## National labours of love

Some of our best-known gardens are maintained by an army of volunteers whose only reward is to watch them bloom. Barbara Abbs reports

**S**ome visitors to gardens open to the public occasionally get agitated when they see elderly gardeners with walking sticks trying to weed a steep rock bank, or a child patiently bedding out plants. They should look again. These are not the Dickensian working practices of Scrooge-like garden owners, but a rapidly growing phenomenon: the volunteer gardener.

A passion for gardening seems to be inherent in some of us, and for the genetically predisposed who haven't yet acquired a garden, or have loved and lost one, volunteering fills a great need. The

opportunities are nationwide. Among those which use volunteer labour are Heligan Gardens in Cornwall; the Royal Horticultural Society garden at Rosemoor in Devon; the Plantation Garden in Norwich, the Lakeland Horticultural Society's garden at Holeslurd in Cumbria; Ness Botanic Gardens, near Liverpool; the Petersfield Physic and West Dean gardens, Hampshire; the Royal Pavilion garden in Brighton, East Sussex; and many National

Trust gardens are among those properties. The unpaid enthusiasts can be the entire work force in gardens managed by non-commercial trusts; in others, they may do preliminary clearance and restoration, and in some, they just ice the garden cake.

The Lakeland Horticultural Society's five-acre garden, near Windermere, was the first garden to use volunteers. One person is responsible for the layout and maintenance of each flower bed. A certain amount of friendly rivalry ensures high standards: no one wants their particular plot to be singled out as the one with the weeds in it. Large works, such as the removal of a tree, have to be agreed by the gardens committee, otherwise each gardener has a considerable amount of freedom in what to plant.

**T**he Petersfield Physic Garden has a similar structure, except that planting is restricted: only 17th-century plants are used.

In gardens which already have professional staff, tasks tend to be more circumscribed. At Brighton, volunteers are given a list of tasks for the day and an explanation of how to do them. Jobs include weeding, hoeing, pruning, pinching out, harvesting and pot scrubbing. This may sound dull to non-gardeners, but it is the stuff of life to many: the opportunity to work in the open, in beautiful surroundings and in congenial company more than makes up for the occasional stint scouring flowerpots. Volunteers can be any age, male or female, with any back-

ground or ability, although frequently they come from the ranks of the young retired. In the town-centre Plantation Garden at Norwich, again managed entirely by volunteers, the gardeners are aged from 13 to 72. Several of them live in the nearby flats. The tasks offer the opportunity to do building work and even archaeological excavation, under expert supervision in this Victorian garden on the site of a medieval chalk and flint quarry. Back in Brighton, Catherine Phillips, a New

Zealand who had had experience of community horticulture while living in the United States, thought there might be an opportunity for her to get involved with the newly restored gardens of the Royal Pavilion. She approached the Pavilion staff and soon found herself co-ordinating a team of volunteers. This is the fourth summer that the pavilion volunteers have been planting and maintaining the Regency garden around the building.

Virginia Hine, of East Sussex County Council, an expert on garden plants of the Regency period, had drawn up a planting plan. Ms Phillips, as co-ordinator, at first directed the planting, but now most of the garden is run as a democracy and little direction is necessary.

Numbers attending the regular Friday-morning sessions vary from five to 15. Several members had never done any gardening before, while others were experienced amateur gardeners used to pruning and propagating.

One of the newest volunteers, Fay Armitage, moved from London to Brighton about a year ago. She left a job as wardrobe mistress at Her Majesty's Theatre, on *Phantom of the Opera*, for a less stressful but more varied life in Brighton. Her parents were keen gardeners. After moving to the town, she walked through the pavilion grounds, liked the gardens, and noticed the volunteers working there. It did not take her long to decide to join them.

Miss Armitage is unusual among the volunteers in that she is not interested in taking up horticulture as a career, but as a hobby. She has a passion for the gardens, and she is not interested in taking up horticulture as a career, but as a hobby. She has a passion for the gardens, and she is not interested in taking up horticulture as a career, but as a hobby.

most of the other members of the group have enrolled on taking professional gardening courses and need practical experience. A stint as a volunteer in a public garden looks good on a CV and provides some alternative reference when applying for paid posts.

For most volunteers, however, gardening all day for money might turn one of their greatest pleasures into a chore. It is not a risk they want to take. Some of the volunteers enjoy the social experience, will work in small groups, and chat as they prune, plant out or weed. Others choose to work alone, involving themselves only with the plants.

Several well-used paths cross the Royal Pavilion grounds and passers-by take an interest in what goes on there. Volunteers are often engaged in conversation. When the garden changed from the municipal-mantled lawns and bright bedding plants to the present layout of mixed shrub and flower beds around 'glades' of longish grass, they were frequently called on to defend the alterations. After four years, the gardens have matured, and comments are invariably complimentary.

The experiment at the pavilion has worked so well that Brighton now has another group of volunteers at Preston Park, which has just received a big lottery award for restoration work.

Volunteers with a week or so to spare, and who would like to do more vigorous work than the planting and maintenance of established gardens should contact the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, which organises pond and scrub clearance, path-laying and other projects, sometimes in historic gardens, such as Heligan but often in other public spaces.

### VOLUNTEERS DIRECTORY

- British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, 01491 839766.
- Heligan Gardens, Cornwall, 01726 844157, RHS Rosemoor Gardens, Devon 01805 624067, Plantation Garden, Norwich, 01603 611669, Lakeland Horticultural Society, 015394 46008, Ness Botanic Gardens, Wirral, Cheshire, 0151 353 0123, Petersfield Physic Garden (Hampshire Garden Trust), 01794 367752, West Dean Garden, Hampshire, 01243 818210, Royal Pavilion and Preston Park, Brighton, 01273 472410.
- National Trust Volunteer Office, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, 01285 657935, or contact your regional office (see telephone directory). National Trust for Scotland, 0131 226 5922.

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## Plants with a Victorian kiss

■ Ascott, Wigg, Buckinghamshire 01296 688242.

Two miles southwest of Leighton Buzzard, off A418. Open tomorrow for National Garden Scheme. Wednesday afternoons and the last Sunday in August. Tues-Sun in Sept; all 2-6 pm (last entrance 5pm). £4, children £2.

High Victorian style and standards of presentation are retained at Ascott, perhaps the most intriguing of the group of Rothschild family houses and gardens that stand close to one another in the Chilterns. Today the Rothschild family and the National Trust look after Ascott.

It is easy to forget that you are in the Home Counties as you look out over the Vale of Aylesbury. In recent years, ambitious new designs by Arabella Lennox-Boyd have complemented the garden's memorable 19th-century features, such as the green and golden yew topiary (especially the sundial, the fountains and statue groups by the American sculptor Ralph Waldo Story), and the combination of terraced lawns and now mature specimen trees. The double herbaceous border, displaying faultless symmetry, is at its peak and a walk lined by beech hedges leads to the lily pool.

Although the 30 acres are instantly recognised as Victorian, there is so much variety that, whatever your interest, there will be something to absorb you.

### GARDENS TO VISIT



Outstanding borders at Pitmuiries

■ House of Pitmuiries, Guthrie by Forfar, Scotland 01241 828245.

Seven miles east of Forfar, via A932. Open daily until Oct 31, 10am-5 pm. £2.

To one side of the 18th-century house walled gardens contain a series of outstandingly planned borders: a double herbaceous border extending away from the house planted in shades of yellow, blue, cream and white; quantities of old-

fashioned roses and a spectacular show of delphiniums. In one place the borders are backed by hedges of clipped purple plum; elsewhere it is yew. Whatever you look, there's something new to admire: the white-painted gateway at the end of one vista or the short avenue of clipped *Prunus serrula*. The garden's atmosphere can only be fully appreciated when you have taken in the tranquil contrast of the riverside walk, shaded by mature oak and beech, which leads past a dovecote and a Gothic wash-house.

■ Brockhole, Lake District National Park Centre, Windermere, Cumbria 015394 46601.

Near Ben Windermere and Ambleside on A591. Open daily to Nov 2, 10am-5pm. Car parking £2.50-£3.50.

The garden's first quality is natural: the outlook west over Windermere to the fells. Its design, by Thomas Mawson, is dominated by a series of formal terraces and its strongly architectural structure is clothed in an absorbing array of plants. The sloping site ensures that frost drains away. Consequently, there are a number of tender plants, such as the weeping tree *Cupressus palmieriana*, and flowering shrubs that originate from New Zealand. Below the terraces is a meadow dotted in summer with wild flowers.

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'If I could work out what purpose was served by wasps I would not grumble, but I cannot think of one, nor have I ever read of one'

Twice within the past week my hand has been grasped enthusiastically as I have been led down garden paths to be shown what I was assured was a miracle of nature. These brief expeditions to the shadier recesses of orchards and sheds were conducted in hushed tones; voices were dropped, as when Attenborough whispers among gorillas. I was being taken to see nature at her most miraculous, God's creation in all its glory. They said:

So why did it leave me cold? Why did I find myself curbing my impatient urge to say, "Oh, come on... just spray it with something. Put it to the torch. Nuke it. Anything!"

The problem is the inmates of the miracle wasps. I have no time for wasps and they have never shown anything other than dislike for me. So when I am shown the home where they breed, and from which they launch offensives, I cannot bring myself to marvel at the sight of it.

This is prejudice. Had it been the handiwork of any other species, I would have stood there with jaw dropping at the

## Time to fight the buzzing nuisance

intricate beauty of its construction. A wasp's nest is the size of a football — at least, these were — built apparently of fine tissue which looks so delicate that a breeze might send it tumbling across the lawn.

This, presumably, was why one of the nests had been cunningly balanced between a pear tree and the garden wall. The other nest was high in rafters away from draughts.

I was told that the nests were woven from fine crumbs of wood, collected by the wasps as they perched on trees, doors and window frames, masticated till they reached the texture of wet paper mache and then crafted into an intricate and delicate maze which became their home. I could not care less. Even if wasps were awarded the contract to construct the Millennium Dome, I would refuse to be impressed.

Try this game for yourself. Draw two

columns on a sheet of paper headed "For" and "Against". Now think of wasps and start filling in the columns. If anyone makes a sensible entry in the "For" column, I think they should be locked in a roomful of wasps until they have learnt their lesson. Yet, curiously, despite the nuisance value of these creatures, country wisdom has never been directed towards their control or extermination.

Retreats have been schooled to deal with rabbits, terriers will take on rats, but what do we have in our rural armoury to halt the wasp in its evil tracks? A jar of

### DOWN TO EARTH



PAUL HEINEY

jam with the lid left off, half-filled with water. Does it work? No. This incompetent wasp trap is without doubt one of the most depressing sights of summer. For the jar to be effective at keeping wasps from public places, such as kitchens and garden seats, it has to be situated near these sites. This attracts even more wasps, and we are afforded a depressing view of a seething mass of striped vermin greedily going for the last traces of the jam, and falling bloated into the water to join their dead or dying compatriots. Worse, some of the wasps do not

drown. Instead, they gather enough jam to fortify themselves for a further assault on nearby humans before the final kamikaze dive into the watery grave. By then, you have probably been stung, a child's tea ruined, a bottle of wine spilt in a failed attempt at swatting and tempers forced closer to breaking point.

If there were a purpose to wasps I would not grumble, but I cannot think of one, nor have I ever read of one. Be assured I am not in any way phobic about buzzing creatures: I happily endure visits from any foraging honey bee, because I know he is going about a useful purpose.

But wasps exist only to satisfy their greed and to irritate people.

I dare you to disagree. Even if you escape a stinging, they have other ways to get you. I have a tree laden with ripening Victoria plums. Wasps wait until the day before the plums are ready

to be picked, then take one suck and leave the rest to rot. They got them all last year. Flies, of course, come a close second to wasps as the most pointless species of all time, and if we consider flora as well, I would be pleased to hear what purpose the stinging nettle serves. What is it trying to protect by its sting? If so, why does the sting not bother its likeliest destroyers: cattle, sheep and horses? Who says nature knows best?

Accordingly, I have no conscience whatsoever about inviting ideas on how — without chemicals — wasps can be controlled, or at least given a bad time.

I have had enough of their bullying ways and it is time to stand and fight. I would love to redress the balance of fear and discomfort. All suggestions are welcome and evidence of their effectiveness would be appreciated.

Remembering the future over a rat-killing debate I once started in these pages, I think we should rule out sadism. In fact, if there is anyone who loves wasps and wants to conserve them, I would be pleased to hear from them. But I am not holding my breath.

Readers' letters on countryside matters of all kinds. Address them to: Paul Heiney, Weekend, The Times, 1 Farringdon Street, London E1 9KN. They are published on the first Saturday of the month.



Miss Hitchman's illustrated work reflecting the beauty of a wooded bog stands the test of time. The area will not be affected by the controversial Newbury bypass

## The lady of Newbury bog

Not much has changed on a Berkshire common since a young woman lovingly detailed its flora and fauna in her diary

In August 1915, while British soldiers were struggling to secure a foothold on the shores of the Dardanelles, a young woman visited a bog near Newbury, Berkshire. Her name was Marion Hitchman, she was 20, and she was doing a teachers' training course at Whitelands College in the King's Road, Chelsea. Her home was in Newbury, where her father was a well known builder, and she went to Snelmore Common, four miles north of the town, as part of a holiday assignment for the college.

She explored the bog there in the morning, the afternoon and the evening, and wrote a vivid account of the flowers, insects and other wildlife there. She illustrated it with beautiful drawings, some in ink and watercolour, some in pencil, and bound it all in stiff brown boards. She called her work *Bogging*.

It is still in perfect condition. "Bogging," Marion begins, on the lined paper, "is most enjoyable work, especially in summertime. The bog is 'in a slight dip or valley between a gorse-covered hill and sharply rising heathland. From either ridge small streamlets trickle into a brook with splashing waterfalls at the lower end of the bog. The brook has cut a six-foot 'gorge' in the gravelly soil; it runs along the bottom of this into a well-wooded basin-shaped glen. There are several very marshy parts in the bog from which turf and moss have been cut."

In Marion's fine, simple prose, it seems like a lost pastoral vision and her delight in it bursts out at the foot of the first page: "The first expedition in the morning was a brilliant success as far as my enjoyment was concerned. The sun was rather hot and glaring, but this helped to show up the bog treasures and encouraged insects and plants to come out. The air was sweet and fresh after much rain."

The flowers bring out her best writing. "The cross-leaved heath grows in the heart of the bog. Its

leaves are pale sage green and hairy. The flowers of this species grow in terminal heads of drooping rose-coloured flowers, which all turn to one side. The whole flower appears as if modelled in wax... On that sunny morning, apart from the heather, the bog asphodel was the crowning beauty of the valley, for its golden brown fruits in tall spikes gave a glow to the bog which was missing in the evening. It is elegant and extremely pretty whether it has bright yellow flowers or golden brown fruits. Not only the small heath butterfly and the tiny common blue one seemed to love resting on the asphodel, but a small brilliant blue dragonfly flew swiftly over and around it."

I visited the common one morning this month. It is now designated as a "country park", but it still has some large, lonely stretches of oak, and some wild heathland with nightjars nesting on it. The map shows two boggy areas on the south side of the common, which are not far from the route of the controversial Newbury bypass (some of the protesters are still there). The larger bog seemed most likely to be the one

that Marion had surveyed, and from the car park I walked down a path through the oaks towards it. The wood soon gave way to bracken-covered hillside and the path became damper. Then, on my right, I saw the bog. It was unmistakable. Small birch trees covered both sides of the valley above the bracken, but at the foot of the valley there was the pink sphagnum moss, the lilac heather and — most thrilling sight of all — the golden and yellow bog asphodel, dotted everywhere.

Clearly, the bog was drier than it had been in Marion's time. There were young birch trees in the centre of the bog, with the moss and the water plants winding between them in the stream, which was now



Marion Hitchman: assignment

just a seeping, invisible flow of water underfoot. Invisible, that is, until I stood too long in one place, and sank. I got several bootfuls of water that way. Perhaps in Marion's time the bog was deliberately kept clear and wet, for the sake of the turf and moss that were cut from it. Further down the valley, I identified the deep gorge where the brook finally appeared and the glen beyond it. A house now stands at the far end.



It was among the flowers in the marshy part of the bog that I felt most strongly the sense of wonder at walking among the scenes Marion had known. Not all the flowers she described were there — I looked for housewort, milkwort, and sundew in vain (though I was told that the fly-catching sundew leaves are to be found there). But a little yellow flower climbed everywhere over the grass and cross-leaved heath — and there it was in her pages: "Another yellow flower found all over the bog was creeping tormentil. It can be distinguished from creeping cinquefoil because its leaves are sessile."

This is the botanical term for stalkless — and sure enough, that is what these leaves were. There were also fluffy cotton grass and soft rush, both of which she describes, and though I did not see any spotted orchids, I found a marsh orchid languishing among some tall, wet grass. But the bog asphodels, many of which still had their delicate yellow petals, were still the heart of the scene. Marion does not mention birds very much, but she heard a woodpecker tapping in a beech tree near the bog, and on her evening visit talks of the lark and peewit "following the rest of the creatures to rest". I did not hear the lark or peewit, but I saw a green woodpecker fly over, while a willow warbler was singing in the birches and a yellowhammer on the heath.

Marion handed in her report to her college and a note marked it "A", adding "Good work. Illustrations Ex" (which I take to mean "excellent"). She qualified as a teacher on August 1, 1916, and spent her career in infants' schools.

I have a roll of yellowing letters of recommendation. "She has a most delightful manner in dealing with children, is most patient, thorough, and has a never-failing sense of humour," wrote the headmistress

of Highgate School in 1928. In 1937, the vicar of St George's, Horsey, wrote: "She has a personality and charm of manner which give her complete control of her class and very obviously attract the children to her. She is a born teacher." What a joy to read of such teaching!

In spite of this evident ease with children, Marion never married. Neither did her sister, Isabel, and they lived together in London for many years. Perhaps the men they might have married died in the Dardanelles or on the Western Front.

When she retired, Marion returned to Newbury. She died, five years ago, at the age of 97. Her *Bogging* study and the other correspondence were found in her cottage after her death by her step-nephew, Frank Hitchman, now the finance director of a large insurance broking firm (Marion's father married again after her mother died, and she had a stepbrother and stepniece). The stepbrother, who was Frank's father, became deputy head of the Atomic Energy Authority and retired as Sir Alan Hitchman. Marion does not seem to have done any more drawing or painting, although late in life she is reported to have said: "I would have gone to art school if there had been enough money."

The family connection with Newbury also appears to have faded. The building firm Hitchman (Newbury) Ltd survives, but is no longer owned by any of the family.

By a miracle, as it might seem, the bog is still there, 80 years after Marion wrote about it. In a year or two, the roar of traffic on the bypass will be audible from it, but I see no reason why it should change in other ways. There might be a case for the local authority to cut back the trees and restore it further.

Some of Marion's pupils will remember her. Otherwise, I think the yellow bog asphodels of Snelmore Common must be her memorial.

DERWENT MAY

## Something to crow about

### FEATHER REPORT

IF ONE talks of a "crow" in England and Wales, one generally means a carrion crow, that glossy black marauder and scavenger that is now so abundant in towns as well as in the countryside (writes Derwent May). In north-west Scotland and Ireland, however, the crows are of a different race. They are hooded crows, which have grey bodies, black wings and tail, and what looks exactly like a black hood over their head.

Carrion crows are found all over France, but when you get to the Alps, hooded crows appear again, and I was watching them last week on the mountainsides above Lake Como in northern Italy. They were much more sinister-looking than carrion crows. They spend a lot of time up on the high crags, but also come down to the lakeside to feed on the shore, and they like to perch on the very tip of the tall, thin cypress trees in the gardens of the villas. When they sit up there, swaying to and fro, their hoods gave them the appearance of executioners eagerly waiting for their victims.

Up on the crags, the hooded crows eyed some other birds flitting around them — the crag martins. These are little brown martins, quite closely related to our house martins, but found only as rare vagrants in northern Europe. The crows would no doubt have liked to get at the martins' nests, but it would have been very difficult for them. There was a deep hollow in the cliff and through field glasses I could make out the martins' mud nests, like half-cups, hanging under its shady roof. There was nowhere a crow could perch — and the "hoodies" must have contented themselves with catching lizards on the slopes.

They cawed and made rolling, clicking sounds like the crows of England. One or two ornithologists have claimed that they can recognise subtle differences in the voices of the two forms, but other ornithologists have poured scorn on this claim. Their cries seemed identical to me. They live in idyllic lives in the Italian sunshine, often flying out and chasing each other, tumbling and dodging to one side in the air in a playful way.

Why are there these two races of crow? They are closely enough related to interbreed where the two populations meet, and indeed there is a narrow hybrid zone running across Scotland. So they are regarded as a single species. But they remain distinct populations. The Scottish and Irish birds are quite

cut off from the other vast area occupied by hooded crows, which runs from southern Europe up into east Asia.

It is now thought that they were originally a single form, which was divided into two populations in the Ice Age and developed their differences while they were apart. They met again when the ice melted. The real mystery is why the hybrids on the boundaries do not thrive. You would have expected that by now there would have been such interbreeding between them that the two races would have totally merged again.

Still, it is to our advantage. The greater the variety in the bird world, the more delightful and intriguing it is.

● What's about Birds — a lesser sand plover at Pagham Harbour, West Sussex; aquatic warblers around The Fleet, Dorset; Cops's shorebirds at Portgwarra, Cornwall; Twitwits — look out for flocks of swallows and house martins gathering to migrate south. Details from Birdline, 0891 700222. Calls cost 40p a minute cheap rate, 50p at all other times.



A hooded crow looks sinister

### ON THE SPOT: MARTINDALE, CUMBRIA

#### Rural recommendations

The place: Martindale Old Church, Martindale, Cumbria.

The view: the tiny church is sheltered by fells. To the north is majestic Hallin Fell and to the south, the more sprawling Boda Fell.

Afficionados: a lone farmer and his family — this place is remote.

Historical interest: the church is home to a 700-year-old yew tree from which the bowmen of Martindale replenished their arrows.

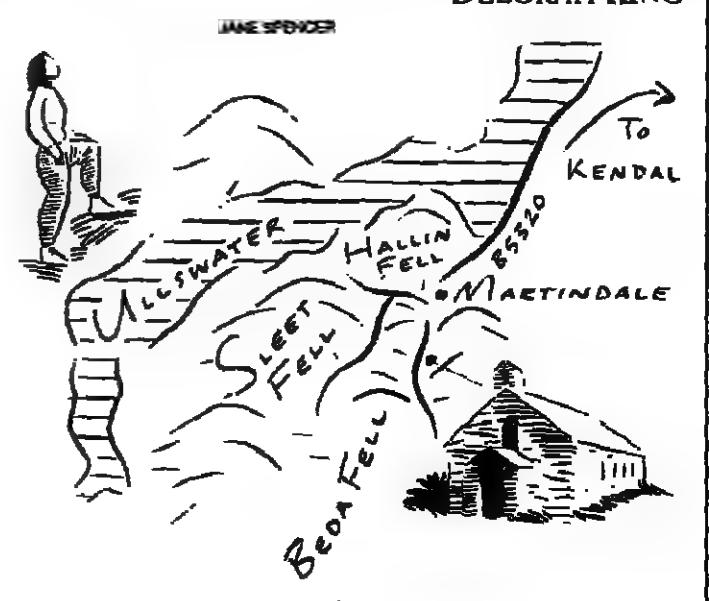
Time to visit: in late afternoon you should have the place to yourself.

How to get there: A6 from Kendal, BS320 towards Pooley Bridge, turn left towards Martindale valley with Ullswater on your right.

OS reference: Sheet 90, Grid Ref: 185/434

Also nearby: Winter Crag farmhouse offers bed and breakfast and there are glorious walks in the area.

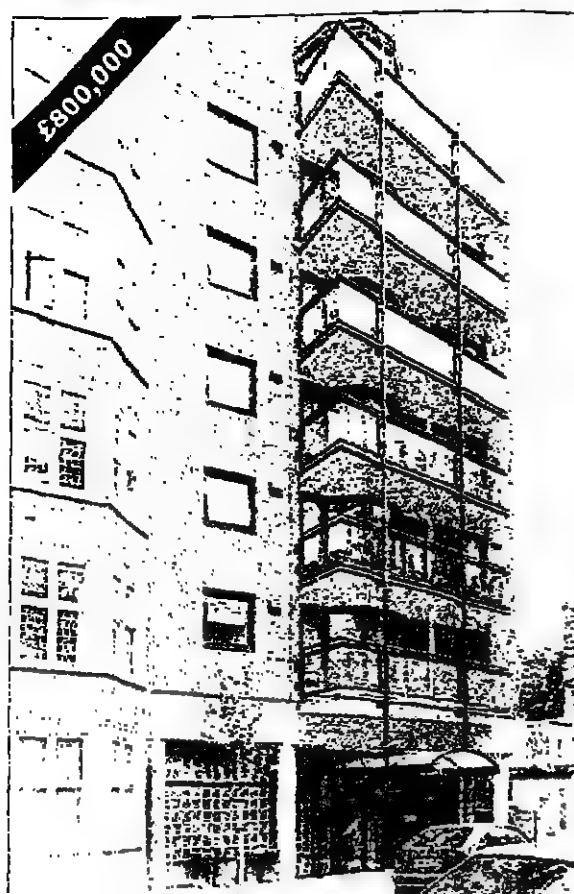
DEBORAH KING





## HOMESWAP

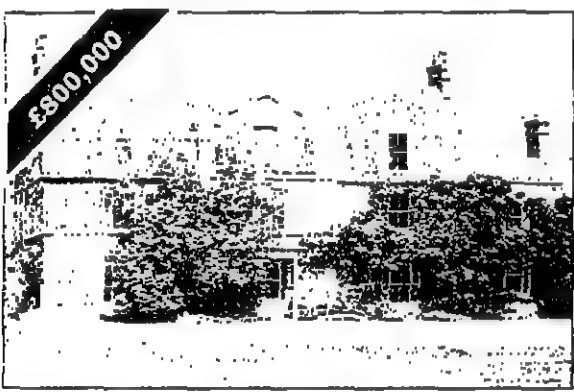
What the same money will buy around the country



For £800,000 you could buy a long lease (more than 90 years) on this three-bedroom, two-bathroom maisonette, with a terrace, on the sixth and seventh floors of a modern block in Fulham Court, Drayton Gardens, London SW10. (Beaneys Peares, 0171-589 1333).



In North Yorkshire, £800,000 would stretch to Billbrough Manor, near York, a Grade II listed ten-bedroom Edwardian country house in 42 acres of formal gardens, park and woodland, with views over the Yorkshire Dales. It is perfect for entertaining, with four ballroom-sized reception rooms, a two-room flat and a self-contained two-bedroom annexe. (Knight Frank, 01904 871672).



Spend the same sort of money in Edgbaston, a mile from Birmingham city centre, and you could have Spring Cottage, a charming Grade II listed six-bedroom Regency house in 2.3 acres of ornamental gardens and grounds. It comes with a self-contained converted coachhouse and a lake. (Knight Frank, 01789 29735).

CHERYL TAYLOR

## We should be wary of adopting Scotland's system of house-buying, says Matthew Beard

ROY ELLSWORTH



## Can we stump the gazumpers?

Ever since the housing market started to show an upturn, prospective buyers have been plagued by fears of gazumping. The practice of selling a property to a higher bidder after a previous offer has been accepted has re-emerged due to a shortage of good properties. At the same time, people are anxious to get on the property ladder as prices continue to rise.

Buyers are learning how sellers can be transformed from being otherwise decent, upstanding people into unprincipled sharks prepared to renege on a deal because the financial gain can be great — and because they can get away with it legally.

As the Government tries to eradicate gazumping, the system of house-buying in Scotland is being touted as a possible solution for England and Wales.

Gazumping north of the border carries severe penalties and is extremely rare. Under the Scottish system, when an offer is accepted it is binding and if either party then pulls out the other sues for damages. The speed of this system is one of its merits and it is

made possible because surveys and searches — the cause of so much delay in England and Wales — are carried out before an offer is made.

However, this can leave househunters out of pocket if there is a boom or a scarcity of property on the market, and bids frequently fail.

In one fashionable area of Edinburgh, where two and three-bedroom flats are soaring in price, stiff competition means buyers will have to bid for several different properties before striking lucky.

"Even if they're only having the most basic valuation done, if they fail five times you're talking about £600 in surveyors' fees without having achieved anything," says John Urquhart, a lawyer for the Nationwide building society and former chairman of the conveyancing committee of the Law Society of Scotland.

Surveyors may be less concerned because a survey carried out on one property can be very profitable if they are approached by other bidders — up to ten in some cases.

Attempts to protect the buyer from the cost of multiple surveys have floundered. A proposal to introduce a single survey paid for by the seller proved unacceptable to some lenders, and many buyers did not trust a survey carried out for the seller.

Some estate agents offer discounts after the first survey, although these only apply to deals handled by that agency.

Also causing problems during a property boom is the standard practice of "blind bidding" where would-be buyers are not allowed to know until after the sale how much their rivals are offering. The recent buyers of a property in Edinburgh West End were shocked to discover their accepted bid of £170,000 was £50,000 more than the next highest.

Alan Baxter of Slater, Hogg and Howison, one of Scotland's largest estate agents, says that in Bearsden, a popular commuter area north of Glasgow, a "hungry band" of bidders is trying to second-guess the highest bid and is chasing prices up by 30 to 40 per cent.

Once the offer is accepted there is no going back. Although details remain to be hammered out by solicitors, the winning bid becomes part of the exchange of contracts and it is not usual to make a bid subject to contract and survey.

The problem is not that the buyer loses out — he may have benefited from an upturn in

## LOOKING AT THE SCOTTISH MODEL

The Scottish system of house selling is one of several that will be considered by ministers as they conduct a study, announced earlier this month, of house buying and selling in England and Wales.

Following a manifesto pledge, the Government has undertaken to look at more than 1,000 house sales around the country. Estate agents, surveyors and solicitors will also have their say on how every aspect of house buying — from making an offer to handing over the keys — can be improved.

Although the study aims to scrutinise the role of solicitors, mortgage lenders and the fees they charge, the greatest interest is likely to focus on measures to eradicate the menace of gazumping.

Earlier this year the Consumer Affairs minister Nigel Griffiths said that changes in the law would be modelled on the Scottish system while keeping in mind the financial drawbacks of purchasers carrying out surveys before making an offer.

In Scotland an agreed offer is a binding contract with stringent penalty clauses and, with the government study due for completion next spring, a variation on this could soon come into force, signalling the end of gazumping.

Latest indications suggest that the Government favours a cost-guarantee scheme in which buyer and seller have to place a deposit with solicitors — as much as five per

cent of the purchase price — when an offer is accepted.

Any party who withdrew would forfeit the deposit to cover costs such as legal fees, surveys and searches.

If buyers and sellers fail to volunteer for the scheme, it may become a legal requirement. But estate agents say this alone would not eradicate gazumping.

Earlier this month the National Association of Estate Agents called on lenders and local authorities to review their systems because, the NAEA says, they open the way to gazumpers by failing to turn around mortgage applications and searches quickly enough.

Bodies representing property professionals have also been asked to sign up to an extended ombudsman scheme which would cover nearly three quarters of firms and provide an independent complaints procedure for most homebuyers and sellers.

Another option is the use of lockout agreements between buyer and seller whereby the seller promises not to accept any other offers as the two parties move towards completion. If the seller breaks the undertaking, the buyer can sue for damages. However, critics say this scheme would be hard to police.

In a further move to cut out gazumping, agents could be obliged to notify buyers if they re-market the property after an offer has been accepted.

the worst excesses of the Dutch auction as seen in England.

Until fairly recently many Scottish properties were sold at auction, and this is still used for repossessed properties. Although it appeals to buyers, it is hard to manage — for example if you are trying to buy something else — and there is little enthusiasm for it among property professionals.

Mr Urquhart says it would be wise to learn from the deficiencies of the Scottish system. "With the market place much bigger in England, the effect of multiple surveys combined with blind bidding would create a lot of pressure and could be inflationary at precisely the wrong time."

## THE WINNERS

JOHN MUIR, a retired building society manager, and his wife Ann, are assured of financial security after the sale of their house in Edinburgh.

When they put the detached house they had been living in for 17 years up for sale, during a property peak, it attracted seven bidders because it is in a suburban area popular with affluent young professionals.

Because people were bidding blind and all trying to top what they imagined would be the next highest bid, the asking price of £120,000 was easily beaten. The Muirs took the highest of six bids at £168,000.

They gained full benefit of this premium because they bought their retirement home — an £80,000 luxury flat in the city centre — from a builder at 1996 prices, before building work had begun.

## THE LOSERS

JULIE MARSHALL, a media sales executive bought a terraced house in Glasgow's fashionable West End last month but immediately wished she hadn't.

She sold her previous house for 10 per cent more than the asking price to move. At the third attempt her offer was accepted after she bid slightly more than she had intended.

She said: "I was delighted to get the house I wanted, but it did annoy me that I had gone £8,000 more than the next highest bidder."

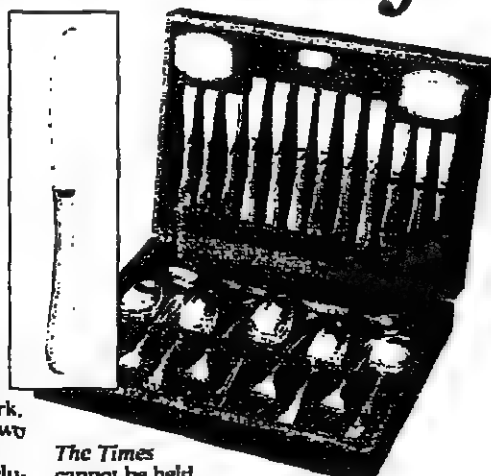
In some ways it would seem fairer if there were a straightforward auction. Everyone would know what everybody else was bidding and could pull out when they wanted to. That must be better than finding out you have thrown away a lot more than necessary."

SUPERB SAVINGS ON ELEGANT CANTEEN OF CUTLERY

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## PROPERTY PROFILE: CHESHIRE

A weekly look at the property market around Britain

Attractions: Chester's galleried arcades, its medieval and roman city walls and cathedral have been admired by many travellers, including Nathaniel Hawthorne and Boswell. Cheshire was home to the Victorian novelist Elizabeth Gaskell, who based several of her novels in the county, including *Cranford*, a tale of 19th-century village life, which drew much from her girlhood at Knutsford, a town with Holmes Chapel, Tarporley, Alderley Edge and Chester. Knutsford is much sought after by buyers. Agents emphasise the area's commuter road links with the M6, M53, M56 and M62 and the A55/A5 from Chester to Holyhead. InterCity services from Chester to London take about two hours and Manchester Airport is within easy reach.

The market: Steady, but good, agents say. Strutt & Parker in Chester reckons that turnover has increased, with a good range of properties for sale in varying price ranges. Jackson-Stops & Staff in Chester reports a number of cash buyers, which has injected confidence into the market.

Prices: These have risen by 10 to 15 per cent for prime properties, says Strutt & Parker. Jackson-Stops estimates that prices fell by 25 to 30 per cent from around 1990 to 1991, with the market bottoming out in 1992 to 1993. Cavendish Ikin in Tarporley says prices began to pick up in autumn 1995.

Expect to pay: From £120,000 to £150,000 for a three-bedroom cottage, £200,000 to £300,000 for a farmhouse with land, and £350,000 to £550,000 for a medium-size country house. Jackson-Stops says. Demand for old rectories, with around five acres and in a good commutable location, outstrips supply, according to Strutt & Parker.

Significant sale: Grade I listed Brereton Hall recently sold through Strutt & Parker for close to its £1.3 million asking price. The Elizabethan mansion, with ballroom, was on the market for about four to five months. The property was sold in two lots with lot two a Georgian coach house. Many would-be buyers are moving into the area because their companies have been relocated to Liverpool or Manchester, says Jackson-Stops. A swifter sale was Riley Bank Farmhouse, near Frodsham, selling close to its £375,000 asking price within 24 hours of going on the market, through Cavendish Ikin.

Outlook: Steady but good, says Strutt & Parker, which adds that people can sell their houses without worrying about not being able to afford their next. Prices will remain firm, says Jackson-Stops, but still have a way to go to return to pre-recession level.

AMANDA LOOSE

Next week: Oxfordshire.









A £20 million villa on the Riviera to suit a modern-day James Bond or even a newly-wed Dodi Fayed



The south-facing pool terrace: Bagatelle, positioned on one of the most desirable sites in Super Cannes, is perfect for the big-time entertainer

## High indulgence in Cannes

There are different levels of playboy status. While for some, lip-stick on the collar, a red Maserati coupe and thong swimming trunks may be enough, the genuine International Playboy will need stronger credentials to earn his title.

A £20 million estate in Cannes, set in four acres with three villas and four pools, will

not only increase the playboy's pulling power but also provide him with a ready-to-wear lifestyle. The higher you climb up the hill to Super Cannes the better your view (both inside and outside your exceedingly well appointed luxury villa). Famous for the film festival (two weeks every May), the Côte d'Azur town is a magnet for Middle-Eastern money

and has a fast-expanding Russian and German expatriate community. Bagatelle, which is positioned as king of the castle on one of the most desirable sites in Super Cannes, is perfect for the voyeuristic big-time entertainer.

This is the sort of house where James Bond (a late 1970s/early 1980s Roger Moore version, not Sean Connery) might have taken his steady-eyed Russian co-workers or ice-blond Scandinavian for a bit of *après travail*. Built in the late 1970s under the instructions of the present owners (a Swiss company), the house has views that are usually found in the set cupboard at Pinewood Studios.

The decor is not immediately easy on the eye. The main villa is awash with marble floors, wall-high paintings of semi-naked nymphs and display cabinets packed with crystal glass. There are more reflective surfaces in each room than in a Hall of Mirrors. If Barbie and Ken ever needed a love nest in France, they would fix it up in the style of the bedrooms at

Bagatelle. The telephone in the master bedroom is perfectly positioned for that untimely call, and the huge cushioned bed allows ample room for Bond to turn his back on his partner, roll over and discuss matters of real import.

The baths in all the en suites are made to be filled with sticky, sweet bubbles, big enough to cleanse the cast and crew of a soft-porn flick in one

sitting. If you do not appreciate seeing your reflection through the equivalent of a gold-plated fish-eye lens, this is not the pad for you. As well as the abundance of mirrors in the party rooms, the taps, basins and flushers in the bathroom are all *d'or pour* for that wealthy, jaundiced look. The facilities upstairs and down could go under the title of "100 different ways to get



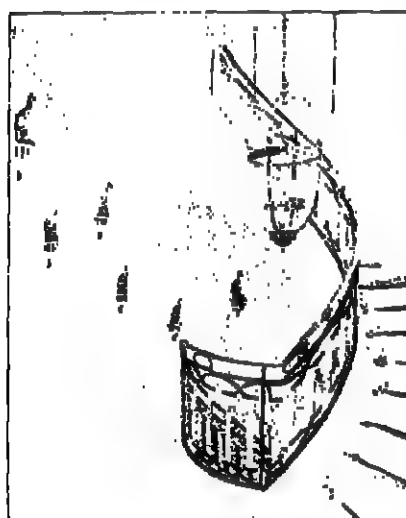
Views to live and let die for: the winter dining room looks over the Bay of Cannes

hot fast". Playboys and girls can frolic in saunas or lounge on sunbeds on heat-trapping mosaic terraces. There is a "disco room" in the main villa with original 1970s hi-fi equipment. The coloured lights and flashing dance floor evoke

memories of hot pants and latex body suits. There are Moroccan theme rooms in the main house and the two guest villas, with ethnic cushion covers and extensive tiling. It would take a Dodi Fayed to be able to operate Bagatelle

as a holiday home, although to retain her dignity Diana, Princess of Wales, would have to strip the main house.

ALEX O'CONNELL  
● Agents: Knight Frank (0171-629 8171)



The luxurious sweep of the main marble staircase leads to Bagatelle's glittering bedrooms

Photographs by Des Jensen

### EVERYBODY NEEDS GOOD NEIGHBOURS



KARL LAGERFELD, the designer, owns properties in France, Italy and Germany. He has spent £5 million on his huge villa in Monaco, given to him for life by Prince Rainier.



GEORGE MICHAEL, the pop singer, lives in a £2 million villa in the chic Marres quarter of St Tropez. The eight-acre property has six bedrooms, a pool and a recording studio.



ELTON JOHN lives in a flamboyant, pink three-storey retreat on a hill overlooking Nice. Bougainvillea covers the walls of the secluded mansion, which is worth £5 million.

### HOUSE OF THE WEEK

● Le Bagatelle, Cannes.  
● Price: Freehold for sale by auction September 11 at Tribunal de Grande Instance de Grasse (Civil Court of Grasse). Auction reserve price is Fr192 million (about £20 million).  
● Travel: La Croisette (5km), Nice International Airport (25km), helicopter from Nice airport to Monaco (five minutes).  
● Entertainment: Blackjack, roulette and slot machines in Monaco, beach prowling on the Côte.



**SURREY - Esher** Price Guide: Excess £850,000  
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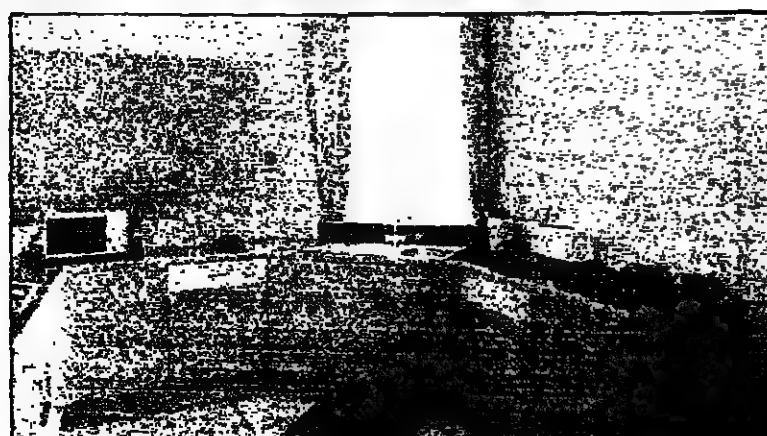
**CAMPDEN HILL GARDENS, W8.**

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3 bedrooms,  
2 bathrooms,  
3 reception rooms,  
kitchen, dressing room,  
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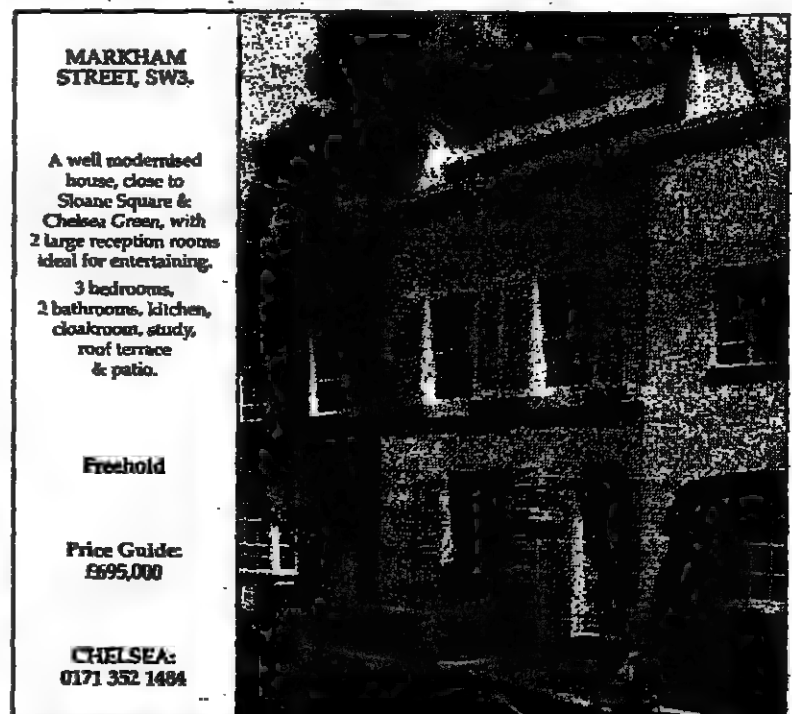
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# At home with the colonials

Try ants if you want a pet but not the bother, says Jessica Gorst-Williams

Forget about the kind of attention-seeking pet that bites into your time when you have none to spare: a dog that needs walking, a cat which demands fish, a bored hamster with a broken wheel. An ant, or rather a colony of ants, will live happily without you.

Sebastian Grant, 29, who has had ants ever since he can remember, says that there are a number of good reasons for keeping the creatures as pets, one of which is that they "won't feel they are prisoners, whereas a hamster or a canary might do".

Because they are easy to keep, it is unsurprising that ant colonies are becoming more popular as household pets. Andrew Stephenson, an exotic insect importer from Falkirk, Scotland, says leaf-cutting ants are the most popular "because they are about the most complex social insects in the world".

In their rainforest habitat, he explains, tropical leaf-cutting ants devastate crops, making them unpopular with local villagers. In the past, the villagers would poison entire colonies, but recently a scheme has been set up encouraging them to collect the ants, so they can be exported to Britain.

The new arrivals are expensive. "South American ants will set a buyer back about £150 just for a nest," Mr Stephenson says. "Or £300 to £700 with the equipment as well. In the wild, such a colony might grow to four million, but you would need premises as large as two tennis courts and one storey high." The colonies most households opt for will contain about 10,000 to 15,000 ants. These should cost about £150, with nest and equipment.

But buyers should be careful before buying, Mr Stephenson



Ant colonies are becoming more popular with people who cannot devote much time to looking after pets. South American species are popular, but expensive

warns. Stories abound of shops selling bits of plastic with half a dozen ants and no queen for a tenner. "What should be included in the package is some aftercare service and advice," Mr Stephenson says. "There should be a bit of ants in some peat, including a queen. For tropical ants this aquarium should be equipped with a thermostat. This will keep the temperature at a constant 25°C."

Inside will be a smaller tank — the size of an eight inch cube — with an entrance hole. This is where the ant's nest is sited.

The nest will double as a garden on which the fungus crop that sustains the colony will grow. A branch will connect it to a flat glass platform at the far end of the tank — this is where the owner should place foodstuffs such as leaves, flowers and bits of ham and cereal.

At first, the ants will excavate the peat. Then they will start gathering and processing the food, which they will combine with saliva and chew into a pulp.

Droppings are added and the mulch is used as fertiliser

for the fungus. Like all pets, ants need water. "To keep the peat moist I spray a light mist of water every day or so," Mr Grant says. "As they tend to throw the debris into the water, that will need draining."

Owners worried that the creatures will escape can be put at ease by the fact that proper nests have an inch or so of water at the base, which locks them in.

As Mr Grant says: "Even if they do get out they are likely

to return to their food source. This happened to my Trinidad ants. They were spotted on the wrong side of the tank but soon made their way back."

This month, Mr Stephenson is going to Gambia to find some weaver ants, which are so named because they create a nest carton by folding over leaves and stitching them together with the silk the larvae produce. A nest of 4,000 will cost about £150.

Mr Grant also has a colony of black carnivorous Portuguese wood ants, which he keeps in a tank with half an

inch of water. "I found a colony living in some wood I found, so took it home and kept them. I mainly feed them on insects or dog food."

Mr Grant says there is no need to buy foreign ants: retrieving and keeping a local ant colony will cost you nothing. "You can start keeping ants in a coffee jar which you should stand in a washing-up bowl," he says.

How many other people's pets make their own food, build their own home and are quiet and cheap to keep? They might be the ideal pet.

## FACT FILE

■ **COLLECT** a nest and put it in some earth into a jar with ventilation. Fill small aquarium with peat and place in bowl with a centimetre of water. Put ants in aquarium with food and sugar water. Spray peat daily.

■ **To buy ants:** Andrew Stephenson (01324 815369); Chiswick Pets (0181-747 0715).

## The National Trust has enraged a village with a scheme to build houses on a farm in Wales. John Young reports

In the fields below Parciau Farm, Colwyn, cattle graze under the trees. Beyond the village of Old Colwyn the sea glimmers faintly in a heat haze. Only birdsong disturbs the silence.

Much of the beauty of the scene has, however, been ruined in recent years by the remorseless intrusion of new housing developments across the valley. Parciau Farm has become a green oasis, defying the onslaught of urbanisation and factory farming.

For local people it provides both a view and a cherished amenity. A public footpath climbs from the main road to the farmhouse, from where they can roam the fields and on clear days enjoy the views across to Snowdonia.

Until recently they were hopeful that the land would remain unspoiled because they knew it was owned by the National Trust. But a few weeks ago they were outraged to discover that the Trust had applied for planning permission for a housing development that would cover about 27 acres, or nearly half the farm.

Since then they have organised an energetic protest group and enlisted more than 1,000 signatories. For the past three weekends the Trust has found itself embarrassed by placard-waving pickets invading its properties such as Bodnant Gardens, in the Conwy Valley; the Telford Suspension Bridge; and Abernethy House in the town of Conwy, Gwynedd, which at this time of year attracts thousands of visitors.

Terry James, chairman of the protest group Occupants, claims that many tourists have been appalled by the Trust's action and have now threatened to resign their membership.

"We feel betrayed," Mr James

## Not on our farmland, thank you

says. He cites the words of Sir Angus Stirling, former Trust chairman, in the 1995 Annual Report. Sir Angus wrote of "the Trust's social responsibility, its duty to consider the interests of its neighbours, the communities it seeks to serve and those who use the land it owns".

However, it is not so straightforward. The farm was given to the Trust in 1970 by the late Muriel Stott who, according to Mr James and his supporters, must have meant it to be left intact. For many years it was used for village fetes and carnivals.

"Otherwise why on earth would she have left it to the Trust?" he asks. "If she had wanted it to be built over, she would have sold it to a developer."

Those who remember Miss Stott personally, like Ena Wynne, a former mayor of Colwyn Bay, are adamant that she wanted the farm to remain un-

spoiled, and of her own home, Plas Parciau, to be used as an old people's home.

The Trust's version is, however, different. Miss Stott's intention, it says, was to present it with an asset which could subsequently be sold to realise funds to support its work elsewhere. The land now occupied by the school and the sports ground was included in her gift and subsequently sold, not given away, by the Trust. Peter Broomhead, its regional director, says the Trust would never have accepted the farm as something to be preserved in perpetuity. "It was an investment for sale at a more appropriate time," he says.

In a statement explaining the Trust's position, Mr Broomhead points out that its primary purpose as a charity is to own and care for places of historic interest or natural beauty. The vast majority of properties owned are held for ever and will never be sold.

"In contrast, it also accepts as gifts a small number of properties which are not of exceptional value in their own right, but are managed on a commercial basis to provide funds to support the Trust's work."

Despite requests from objectors, Miss Stott's letter donating the farm



More than 1,000 people have signed a petition about Parciau Farm

to the Trust has not been made public. This was because, he said, it was a private letter that she would not have wanted published.

The Trust's decision to apply for planning permission was prompted because the land at Parciau has been zoned for residential development in the latest local plan published by Colwyn borough council

after a long public inquiry. The application, due to be submitted last Wednesday, has now been postponed until October, but Graham Wild, the planning director of the council, says that it is likely, though not certain, to be approved.

Many people will feel that the Trust, of all organisations, should be opposing the developers, not

abetting them. Recently it has been criticised for selling sites in Dorset and part of the Dunham Massey estate in Cheshire.

However, Trust officials are adamant that there has been no change in policy. When Dunham Massey was given to the Trust by the Earl of Stamford in 1979, part of it was specifically designated to be sold so as to help maintain the rest of the estate. "Without that provision we would not have been able to accept the gift," a spokesman says. "To portray us as selling off properties all over the place which we should be preserving is untrue."

The Parciau objectors remain unconvinced. They accept that, given the extent of development, the farm can no longer be described as a beauty spot and realise that, unlike the Trust's much visited "honeypots", it has little to attract visitors from outside the area.

However, what has not been taken into consideration, they say, is the wildlife. Local veterinary surgeon Ann Owen, for example, has found ample evidence of a large and thriving badger sett which would be destroyed by development, and a colony of short-eared bats has also made its home in the farm buildings which the Trust has allowed to become derelict. The present state of these buildings, with doors and windows smashed and surrounded by debris, is evidence, the objectors say, that the Trust cannot wait to get rid of its property.

It is difficult to refute the Trust's case: despite revenue from investments, legacies, donations and membership fees, the cost of maintaining and restoring its growing list of properties continues to rise. But the price that must be paid is that little gems such as Parciau may be lost for ever.

## A VET WRITES

Three weeks ago, my daughter acquired two guinea pigs named Hattie and Henry. They arrived complete with hutch, water and feeding bowls, food and instructions. But I am sure Hattie's pregnant. What should I know?

The gestation period is between 64 and 70 days. The average litter is three, four or five. The youngsters are fully developed at birth: they arrive with teeth, able to run about, eyes wide open. They suckle for three to four weeks, but eat solid food from a few days old. Trust Hattie. She knows what to do and unless she is obviously unwell, or straining and producing nothing for an hour or more, don't interfere.

Conventional wisdom says Henry should move into another cage, but plenty of unexpected litters arrive with the sire present and all goes well. If Henry remains in residence, there will be some more new-arrivals in ten weeks. Castrating Henry will avoid this.

We're moving house shortly — 100 miles north — and taking two cats. One is two years old, the other nearly nine. Everyone tells us something different about acclimatising them. Please help.

Cats travel best with empty stomachs. Which means arriving at their new home feeling hungry. Wait an hour or so. When they tell you they are starving open the back door, let them look out, then offer a bowl of their favourite food. Hunger will bring them in.

Keep up this "go out hungry, come back for food" routine for a couple of weeks, gradually increasing the interval between going out and feeding. Moving 100 miles makes things simpler. Cats moved a mile or so, within familiar territory, are more inclined to return to their old home.

Our golden cocker, Susie, has caught lice. The vet prescribed a shampoo to be used four times at five-day intervals. We're worried about the children. Could they catch Susie's lice?

Don't worry about the children. Susie's lice are a different species from the human ones. Lice are easily killed by most insecticidal shampoos, but nits — louse eggs — are great survivors. The five-day interval is important. Shampoo number one kills the adult lice. Number two kills newly hatched lice before they can mate and lay eggs. Bath number three sweeps up late-hatching nits, and the fourth is for good luck.

JAMES ALLCOCK  
Writes for The Times, The Sunday Times, The Times, The Pennington Press, London, E14 4NN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.

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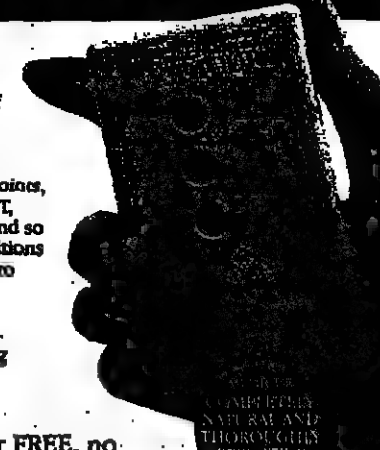
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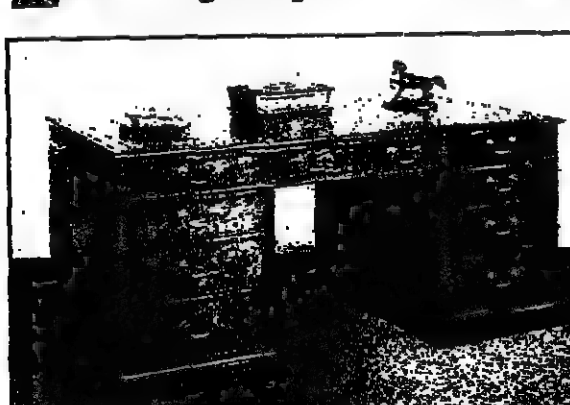
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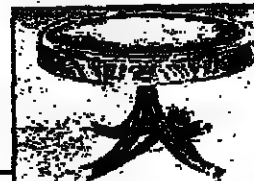
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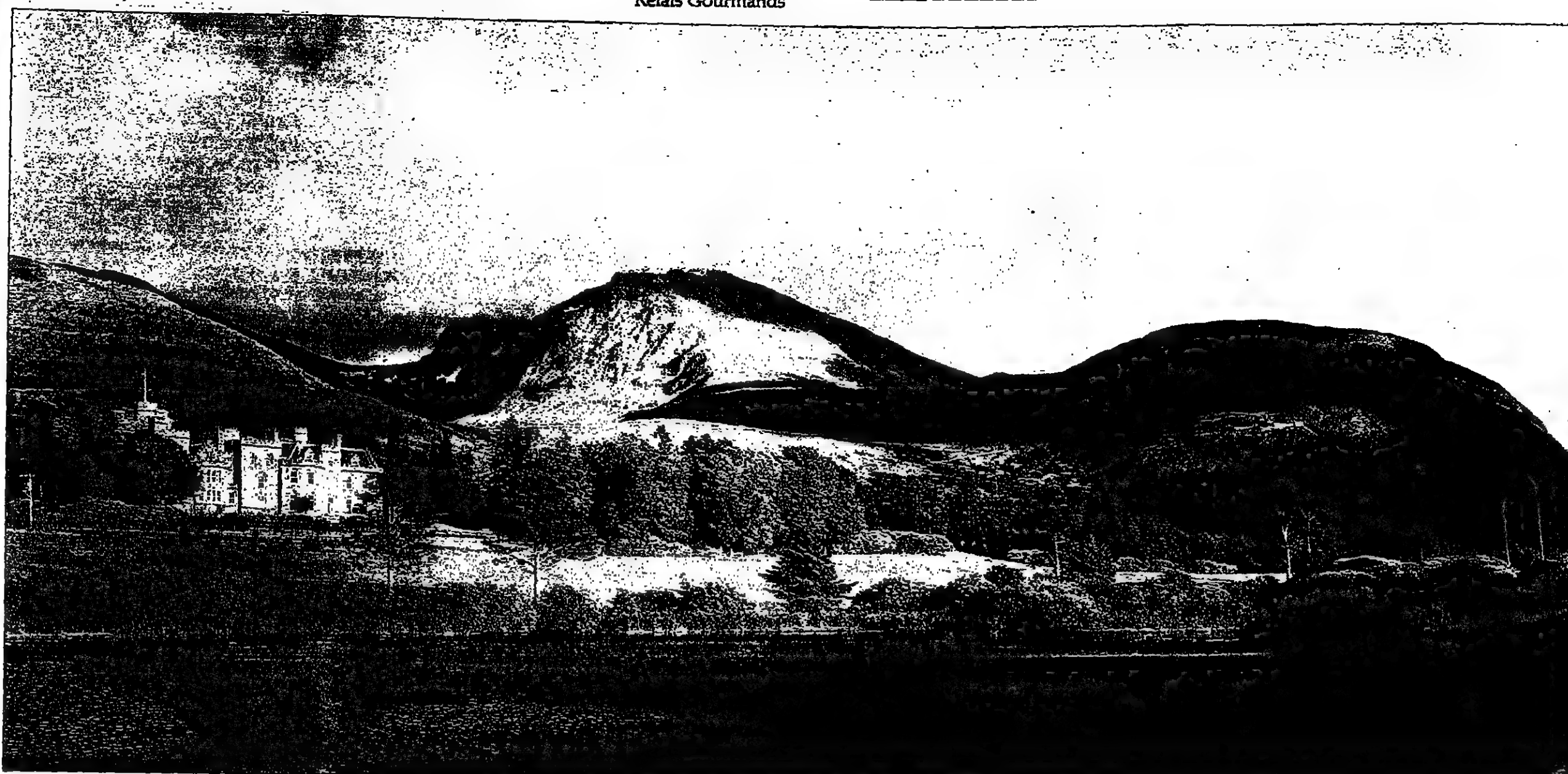
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This is the sixth year running that *The Times* has brought you our outstanding Passport to Europe promotion. Those thousands of readers who have already taken advantage of it know what a treat is in store. For readers new to the luxury of a Relais & Châteaux break, your stay will be an experience to remember.

The offer is valid between September 22, 1997 and April 9, 1998 and gives you a choice of 180 hotels in 16 countries renowned for their individuality and cuisine.

Passport to Europe offers an inclusive package for two people for one night at a price which includes your stay, dinner and breakfast, plus service charges and VAT. Prices start from £48 per person.

All you have to do is collect four out of the six tokens appearing in *The Times* today and next week and send them with the application form, printed on page four of this Passport to Europe insert. You will then receive a welcome pack which includes the Relais & Châteaux 1997 International Guide, details of

the hotels participating in this offer, plus a list of 175 restaurants offering *Le Lunch* — an exclusive invitation to *Times* readers to enjoy a gourmet lunch at the unbeatable price of £35.

You will also receive comprehensive details about a range of discounted travel offers from Leisure Direction. Once you have received your promotion pack, you can make reservations either direct with your chosen hotel or through a central reservations free telephone number.

Relais & Châteaux is a consortium of independently owned and mostly family-run hotels whose guiding philosophy is the five Cs: Character, Courtesy, Calm, Charm and Cuisine. Membership is regulated by the member-hotellers, so the reputation of all depends on the performance of each.

## Your dream ticket to the best of Europe

You can save 25 per cent or more on a stay at any one of 180 of the finest hotels. A strong pound means there has never been a better time to take that break, says Heather Kirby

If it is unusual for hotels of this standard to give any discounts, it is even more unusual that they should give discounts in their restaurants, as many of these are run by celebrated chefs; all are of exceptional quality. In this country they include Raymond Blanc at Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons and Michel Roux at the Waterside Inn.

The majority of hotels are set in beautiful countryside parks or gardens. Mostly they are converted castles, abbeys, mills, staging posts or manor houses. They offer more than just a meal and a room for the night: they provide their guests

with a concept of general well-being in comfortable, elegant and quiet surroundings, where excellent service and superb food are all part of the service.

Among the hotels there are 92 in France and 16 in the UK, including Summer Lodge near Dorchester, where you can stay for just £147.50 per couple, and Hambledon Hall, a 19th-century hunting lodge near Rutland, where you save £60.

Participating for the first time this year is one of Relais & Châteaux's oldest members, Inverlochy Castle, Fort William. Queen

Victoria is said to have fallen in love with the place and it is easy to see why. At the foot of Ben Nevis, with a loch and Scotch mist in the distance, Inverlochy is a dream destination for a short break.

The price for two is £315 instead of the usual £420.

Another first is the glamorous Hôtel de Crillon, Place de la Concorde, Paris. You will dine in one of their famed restaurants and enjoy one of the most elegant views in the world. With your Passport you will save approximately £120 per night.

Among the hotels in Ireland is

Longueville House, Co. Cork, where sheep graze in the grounds. The Blackwater River runs through the estate and the Mallow, Killarney, Cork, Tralee and Ballybunion golf courses are close by. Two can stay and dine for only £153.

There are many magnificent bargains on offer, including five hotels in the Paris area for less than £150 per night per couple. They include Le Manoir, an old hunting lodge, Hostellerie Le Clos, a Norman manor, and the Château de Courcelles, surrounded by champagne vineyards.

Pierre and Jany Gleize's establishment La Bonne Etape in the Alpe-de-Haute-Provence, will welcome you for £100 for two. You will sleep with the scent of lavender from the surrounding fields wafting through the windows.

With the exchange rate favouring

the pound, there has never been a better opportunity to take advantage of our Passport to Europe.

Having a MasterCard (there are more than 300 million in circulation, almost 12 million in the UK) will assist you with the other fantastic part of this year's promotion. This is *Le Lunch*, an entirely new concept in eating out (see below). When you receive your promotion pack you will find a tear-off order form which is part of the cover of your Relais & Châteaux 1997 guide. You will receive a prepaid voucher with which to pay for your meal. And there are some sensational restaurants where you can treat yourself and a friend to a gourmet meal for a fraction of the usual price.

Among them is Girasol, near Alicante, Spain where, for owner Joachim Koerper, cooking is a performance art. With classical music playing in the background and high chairs giving it the feel of a banquet, his restaurant will give you hours of pleasure as you savour one subtle flavour after another, to the accompaniment of fine wines.

There are many more equally wonderful places to dine awaiting you. So start collecting the tokens then send away for the guide — and prepare to experience them for yourself.

## Spoilt for choice with an international line-up

In a *Times* special offer just £35 buys your passport to many of the finest restaurants in Europe.

Robin Young guides the gourmet

Excellence should never be confused with exclusivity. Hotels and restaurants do not earn a good reputation by catering to only the seriously wealthy. That is more likely to mean they are simply pretentious and overpriced.

Places of genuine quality stand out through their ability to provide special treats for people from all walks of life, and make them feel welcome, comfortable and contented — whatever their financial background.

One aspect of this year's special offer presented by *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* in conjunction with Relais & Châteaux Hotels is dedicated to this very notion.

The offer, providing an unprecedented opportunity to enjoy the finest international cooking in the most delightful and agreeable surroundings, is called *Le Lunch*. It is, in effect, a designer luncheon voucher for gourmets, valid in 175 Relais & Châteaux hotels in 13 European countries. It is a one-price ticket to the gastronomic delights that have made Relais & Châteaux hotels renowned for their culinary excellence.

*Le Lunch* vouchers, priced at £35 each, make even some of the smartest and most luxuriously appointed Relais & Châteaux hotels and restaurants (the Relais Gourmands) affordably accessible to all readers of *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*.

Standards of cooking have always been of paramount importance to the Relais & Châteaux consortium. No establishment is admitted to membership unless its standards of cuisine are judged high enough. The judges are existing members, many of whose restaurants are already acclaimed in guidebooks and showered with stars, rosettes and other awards. Such restaurateurs and chef-proprietors make the most knowledgeable and toughest restaurant critics.

Relais & Châteaux members are also, by definition, independent and privately owned hotels, each with its own individual style and character.

But the one thing that all the offers have in common is the price — just £35. That sum buys a voucher exchangeable at lunchtime at any of the 175 participating hotels or restaurants. In some it will cover a



You can sample the creations of highly rated chef owner Horst Petermann, centre, at the Restaurant Kunststube near Zurich

four-course meal with wine, water and coffee. In many, the management will provide a special fixed menu, while others will encourage customers to take their choice à la carte.

While most of the hotels and restaurants joining the scheme are in France, where 102 leading establishments will be offering *Le Lunch*, eight participating establishments are in the United Kingdom, and two in Ireland. And there are opportu-

nities to indulge in the pleasures of *Le Lunch* in Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria, Slovenia, Sweden, Italy and Spain.

The majority of the 175 participating restaurants have Michelin stars. And four have the three-star awards which denote that Michelin rate the food so highly it is worth undertaking a whole journey just for the sake of the eating experience.

Such three-star destination dining rooms include: the Côte Saint-Jacques at Joigny on the banks of the Yonne, where Jean-Michel Lorain will present a four-course fixed menu with wine and coffee included — all this in exchange for the *Le Lunch* voucher.

It is not so distant Burgundian neighbour, Marc Meneau at L'Esperance at Vézelay, charges extra for wine and

coffee but the four-course fixed menu may, as a consequence, be particularly lavish.

Another three-star experience awaits at the Restaurant Schwarzwaldstube within the Hotel Traube Tonbach in Germany's Black Forest, where the chef de cuisine is Harald Wohlfahrt, a master of classic French cuisine.

Finally there is Don Alfonso 1890, an Italian Relais Gourmand at Santa Agata sue Due Golfi, overlooking

the Gulfs of both Naples and Salerno, producing its own poultry, vegetables and oils and specialising in cooking infused with Mediterranean herbs and spices.

The two-stars enthusiastically promoting *Le Lunch* include famous names like Alain Chapel at Mionnay near Lyon; Jean Bardet in Tours on the Loire; Firmin Arrambide's Les Pyrénées at St Jean-Pied-de-Port in the Pays Basque; the restaurants of Michel Rostang and Guy

Savoy, Alain Ducournet's Carré des Feuillants and the historic Grand Vefour in Paris; Pic in Valence; and the Auberge des Templiers at Les Bezauds, Boismorand near Montargis, one of the founder members of Relais & Châteaux 50 years ago.

In the United Kingdom the two-star participants include both Michel Roux fils at Le Gavroche in Mayfair, the establishment which can claim to have laid the foundations of modern British cookery under the direction of his father, Albert; and the inexhaustibly energetic Raymond Blanc at Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in Great Milton, Oxfordshire, now firmly established as this country's highest rated country house hotel.

Among the other hotels and restaurants participating are many rising stars, including establishments whose chefs are graduates of famous Relais & Châteaux kitchens elsewhere. One tipped to watch is Horst Petermann, the German-born owner chef at the Restaurant Kunststube at Küssnacht, a few minutes from Zurich.

There is no reason to limit the number of establishments visited using *Le Lunch* vouchers. They also make excellent gifts for friends. But whichever Relais and Châteaux establishment you choose, after 40 years experience as a customer I can honestly say I would be astonished if you were disappointed.



# RELAIS & CHATEAUX

## Surrounded by beauty and medieval magic

DORDOGNE

**Brian MacArthur**  
takes the scenic  
route to a castle

**O**n almost any journey through France there are sights that are so spectacular you are forced to stop and savour them. There were several such moments on a holiday last week — the first sight of Carcassonne, the cathedral at Albi, the valley of the Lot, the rural beauty of the Tarn.

Another, as we drove from Larroque in the Tarn via Rocamadour to Lacave, where our journey was to end, was the first sight of the Château de la Treynne, perched over the River Dordogne in the Lot. We gazed in awe at this beautiful medieval castle, standing sheer over the river and seeming as if it had been created by the 20th century wizards of Disney instead of the French between the 14th and 17th centuries.

At the close of a day's driving along the minor roads of France in that midsummer heat, the prospect that cheers is a swim, a bath, a shower, an hour of reading and decent dinner. The Château de la Treigne, owned by Michele Gombert-Devals, set in 300 acres of parkland with 12 rooms and two apartments in all shapes and sizes, each elegantly decorated and with jumbo beds, met very expectation.

We sat in the garden under a Cedar of Lebanon and read our books. We swam under trees in a pool surrounded by sloping lawns. Back in our room at the top of the castle we decided against the whirlpool bath and opted instead for the Turkish bath and its jets, from the girls' world which has just

And then as the sun set over the river and the wooded hills beyond.



**Château de la Treyne: set in 300 acres of parkland**

we had a long and lingering dinner on the floodlit terrace overlooking the river far below. Our small cup of melon soup was followed by lobster, John Dory fillets with aubergines, lamb stuffed with vegetables in an olive sauce, a plate of Roquefort served with a glass of Montbazillac, and a poached white peach served with a granite of prune brandy and petit fours, and coffee with a glass of vieux prune—all served on Limoges china, costing a lot less than a similar dinner in London and sending us to bed very content indeed.

Our day at the Château de la Treyme — we stayed on for breakfast and lunch (baby rabbit, roast salmon) next day and read in the garden — was a perfect end to a French holiday (just as it would be a perfect beginning). Lacave is 25 miles from Brive, where we caught the motor rail back to Calais.

My other Relais & Châteaux discovery last year was Les Logis de l'Aubergade, a 13th-century house in the small hilltop village of Puymiroi near Agen in the Lot et Garonne. Puymiroi is one of those attractive French villages which seems almost deserted. Yet it boasts the outstanding restaurant of the area, attracting gourmets from as far away as Toulouse, 90 kilometres along the motorway, where owner-chef Michel Trama has won two Michelin stars and four Gault Millau roques and has the Gallic wit to serve a "hamburger" of foie gras.

Over the past few years, his wife Maryse has developed the hotel arm of the restaurant with a walled garden and small swimming pool. There are now ten rooms, each boldly designed with a superb mixture of ancient and modern furniture.



**The restaurant at the Crillon:** The service is so impeccable that you could probably order in any tongue you liked.

I have often wondered how the other half lives. Now I know. They go to Paris and they check in at the Hotel de Crillon. Let us be clear. I am not a stranger to luxury overnights. I have stayed in hotels classed among the best in the world. But none has the sheer style, *la grande pompe*, of the Crillon.

Built in the mid-18th century, when every public building was a symbol of French pride, the long, colonnaded facade, with its balconies and tall windows, is as equally suited to a palace as to a hotel. Location adds to the sense of majesty.

The Crillon looks out over Place de la Concorde, with its Egyptian obelisk at the centre and the National Assembly beyond. To the left is the Panthéon, Notre Dame and the Louvre. To the right, the gold dome of Les Invalides. It is but a short walk to

# I've dined and gone to heaven

PARIS

the Champs Elysees, and one of the charms of staying at the Crillon is to be able to stroll for an evening drink in what is still a most romantic setting. Just try to ignore the less agreeable sights, such as the sharp-suited bouncers outside the fashionable night-spots. The bar at the Crillon was famous in the prewar days as the haunt of foreign correspondents. With the American Embassy next door, it is still a popular meeting place for the international set, but now the business people get the

best tables. It is the same in the Ambassadeurs, the grandest of the Crillon's two restaurants. The service is impeccable, efficient but never overbearing, and conducted, it seems, in whatever language the client chooses. If your palate tends towards the rich, the foie gras will prove irresistible, but my own culinary trip to heaven was via the lobster salad, followed by rabbit in mustard sauce. The wines are expensive but quality and price are well matched and, what hell, this is a special occasion.

And so to bed. There are suites big enough to accommodate a

*small army. These are at the front of the building, where grandees of suitable stature might feel the need to address the crowds from one of the balconies. I was blissfully happy with an arrangement that took in a drawing room furnished in imperial style.*

There was a bodyguard outside my door. Not for me. I hasten to add. He was there to protect the Sheikh of Araby, who had booked the rest of the corridor for himself and six wives. Bidding him (the bodyguard, not the sheikh) goodnight, I asked, as jocularly as possible, what I was to do if there was trouble. He patted the bulge in his jacket. "Let me look after it."

Such is the womb-like comfort and security engendered by the Hotel de Crillon, I did not doubt him for a moment.

**BARRY TURNER**

## Take a luxury break: special offers for readers of *The Times*

HOTEL	NORMAL RATE	PROMOTION RATE	HOTEL	NORMAL RATE	PROMOTION RATE	HOTEL	NORMAL RATE	PROMOTION RATE
<b>FRANCE</b>			<b>CHATEAU DE CODIGNAT</b>			<b>CZECH REPUBLIC</b>		
<b>Paris</b>			Hostellerie La Poularde - RG	FFR 1670	FFR 1250	Hotel Hoffmeister	£159.23	£119.00
Hôtel de Crillon - RG	FFR 4870	FFR 3652	Villa Florentine	FFR 1800	FFR 1350			
Hôtel de Vigny	FFR 2494 (888 only)	FFR 1870 (888 only)	Michel Chabran - RG	FFR 2720	FFR 2000			
				FFR 2160	FFR 1620			
<b>Paris Area</b>			<b>Alps</b>			<b>AUSTRIA</b>		
Cazaudore et La Forestière	FFR 1850	FFR 1350	Château de Faverges de la Tour	FFR 1870	FFR 1250	Deuring Schlossje - RG	OS 3,260	OS 2,445
Le Manoir	FFR 1850	FFR 1150	Château de Divoine	FFR 1830	FFR 1370	Sporthotel Singer	OS 2,280	OS 1,710
Hostellerie du Bas-Bréau	FFR 2590	FFR 1900	Château de Coudrée	FFR 1880	FFR 1430	Schlosshotel Igls	OS 4,400	OS 3,080
Auberge des Templiers - RG	FFR 2160	FFR 1560	La Verniaz et ses chalets	FFR 1455	FFR 1090	Hotel der Bär	OS 3,240	OS 2,430
Château d'Esclimont	FFR 2150	FFR 1800	Auberge du Bois Prin	FFR 1400	FFR 1050	Hotel Schloss Mönchstein	OS 5,940	OS 4,455
Hostellerie Le Clos	FFR 1800	FFR 1200	Chalet du Mont d'Arbois	FFR 2210	FFR 1660	Hotel Goldenner Hirsch	OS 5,300	OS 3,950
Royal Champagne	FFR 1900	FFR 1425	Le Ski d'Or	FFR 1500	FFR 1125	Hotel Grüner Baum	OS 3,050	OS 2,300
Château de Courcelles	FFR 1730	FFR 1280	Fitz Roy Hôtel	FFR 2000	FFR 1400			
<b>Pas de Calais, Normandy &amp; Brittany</b>			<b>Provence / Côte d'Azur / Corsica</b>			<b>SLOVENIA</b>		
Château de Montreuil	FFR 1910	FFR 1400	La Cardinale et sa Résidence	FFR 1800	FFR 1350	Hotel Vila Bled	£135.00	£102.00
La Ferme Saint-Siméon	FFR 2860	FFR 2145	Château de Rochegude	FFR 2160	FFR 1620			
La Chaumière	FFR 1890	FFR 1418	La Bonne Etape - RG	FFR 1430	FFR 1000			
Château d'Audrieu	FFR 2140	FFR 1605	Hostellerie de Crillon le Brave	FFR 1580	FFR 1085			
Hôtel de la Plage	FFR 1440	FFR 1080	Château de Montcaud	FFR 1580	FFR 1185			
Le Goyen	FFR 1700	FFR 1275	Le Vieux Castillon	FFR 1820	FFR 1365			
Château de Locuénolé - RG	FFR 1496	FFR 1122	Hôtel Jules Cesar	FFR 1700	FFR 1275			
Castel Clara	FFR 1970	FFR 1475	Auberge La Regalido	FFR 1850	FFR 1387			
Le Bretagne et sa Résidence - RG	FFR 1800	FFR 1350	Le Prieuré	FFR 2100	FFR 1575			
L'Auberge Bretonne - RG	FFR 2500	FFR 1875	Hostellerie Les Frânes	FFR 2360	FFR 1770			
Castel Marie-Louise	FFR 1580	FFR 1185	Auberge des Naves	FFR 2040	FFR 1500			
			Le Mas des Herbes Blanches	FFR 1870	FFR 1410			
<b>Loire Valley</b>			Domaine de Châteauneuf	FFR 1760	FFR 1300			
Château de Noirieux	FFR 1650	FFR 1235	Hôtel Les Roches	FFR 2190	FFR 1642			
Château de Marçay	FFR 1700	FFR 1275	Château de Trignace	FFR 1406	FFR 1055			
Jean Bardet - RG	FFR 2750	FFR 1925	Château Saint-Martin	FFR 3990	FFR 2990			
Les Hautes Roches	FFR 1665	FFR 1249	Le Cagnard	FFR 1710	FFR 1280			
Château de Noizay	FFR 1520	FFR 1140	Château de la Chèvre d'Or	FFR 3050	FFR 2280			
Le Choiseul	FFR 1950	FFR 1460	La Villa	FFR 1662	FFR 1247			
Domaine des Hauts de Loire - RG	FFR 1900	FFR 1425						
			<b>BELGIUM</b>			<b>GREAT BRITAIN</b>		
			Hostellerie Saint-Roch	BFR 10,000	BFR 7,500	47 Park Street & Le Gavroche - RG	£568.00 (weekend)	£425.00 (weekend)
						The Waterside Inn - RG	£319.00	£240.00
						Le Manoir aux Quatre Saisons - RG	£458.60	£330.00
						Hartwell House	£292.00	£219.00
						Chewton Glen Hotel	£368.00	£276.00
						Stock Hill Country House	£260.00	£180.00
						Summer Lodge	£225.00	£147.50
						Gidleigh Park	£365.00	£270.00
						Longueville Manor	£231.00	£170.00







Motor caravan, Mini, motorbike, his and hers bicycles... these American tourists had their own, home-made integrated transport policy

## But where were the rollerskates?

I had been fishing for a few hours off the beach at Slapton on the south Devon coast and was looking forward to a fish supper (always assuming I could find a fishmonger who was still open at that time of night). Slapton is a long beach with strong historical associations, for it was here that American lives were lost during rehearsals for the D-Day landings.

There is a memorial to the men who died behind the beach, where there is also a large car park. I was lugging my fishing gear over the boulders at the back of the beach, heading back to the car, when the deep note of a very serious engine made me lift my head. An RV was pulling into the car park.

RV stands for recreational vehicle and is an American term which is fast spreading to this country,

### DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION

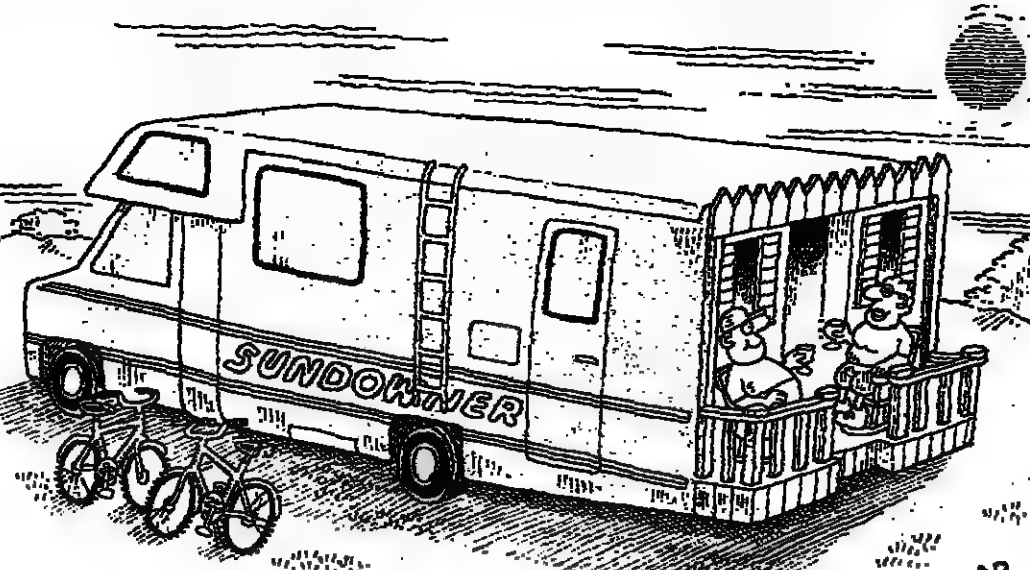


Peter Barnard

though we still tend to call these vehicles motor caravans. I am, as you know, not enamoured of the sort of caravans people tow behind cars, but motor caravans and RVs are another matter: these are proper vehicles, ones with self-sufficiency.

The point about the one that pulled into Slapton car park, as I discovered during a conversation with the owners, was that this vehicle incorporated nearly every form of transport one could ever need. The owners were an American couple and had come to Slapton because the father of one of them had been killed in the D-Day rehearsals.

I showed them the memorial and they showed me over the RV, which they called Bertha. It was not that large, I think about 20ft, but it was beautifully equipped. And Bertha had her own family. First there was an Austin Mini, which was towed behind. This gave the couple, who were retired and had been touring Europe for a couple of years, more flexibility for exploring the lanes of places like Devon.



whether they should sell the Mini, as this made the unit 10ft longer and in some ways doubled up with the motorcycle.

I told them to hang on to the Mini while they were in Britain and the talk as we parted was of selling the Mini when they moved on to southern Europe, where rain would be less of a problem. Aside from that little dilemma, the Americans had their own, home-made integrated transport policy.

And, apart from the RV itself, none of it cost all that much. Indeed, after buying the RV, the motorcycle, the bicycles and the Mini there had been enough left over to fund an itinerant lifestyle for as long as they wanted. Left over from what? Why, from the man's early retirement package. He had retired from... General Motors.

On Bertha's roof rested two bicycles, his and hers. Neither the man nor the woman liked cycling, but they used the bicycles at least twice a week for exercise. I thought this was very American. Who could imagine a British family lurching bicycles around a whole continent just to ensure they got some exercise?

Not that the couple were averse to fun on two wheels. Large brackets, on which rested a motorcycle, had been bolted just below the RV's rear window. I forget the details, but I doubt that it was in the class of the BMW Cruiser CAR 97 is giving away this week, but it was certainly a bike to get you from A to B in a hurry.

So when you added it all up, the couple had a travelling home, attached to a small saloon car, for exercise purposes, attached to a hefty motorcycle. And in case they became bored with land transport, they had a canoe strapped to the roof alongside the bicycles. Their only concern when I met them was

GOOD to see that British cars, the Jaguar XK8 and the Range Rover 4.0SE, topped the first security league table produced by *What Car?* magazine. But what an indictment of the industry in that of 72 cars tested, only eight met the Home Office criteria. I hope the makers of the other 64 will be shamed into taking action.

## Jag lover finally has his dream

KEITH Pellen has been an enthusiastic driver since buying a second-hand Triumph TR2 more than 30 years ago — and he was more than delighted when he went to collect his new car last Saturday, writes Christina Asare Owusu.

For Mr Pellen from Theydon Bois, Essex, had won a Jaguar XK 150 after entering a competition in CAR 97 last month. He took his wife, Jean, to collect it from Garage on the Green, the specialist classic dealer in Fulham, London.

Mr Pellen, 53, a civil engineer, said he had always admired Jaguars and had wanted to own one for years, but the opportunity had never arisen.

The XK 150 with its 3.8-litre straight six engine was the ultimate development of Jaguar's first popular post-war sports car. It was the model which immediately preceded the ground-breaking and legendary E-Type.

"You can always tell when you are driving an old car. All the Jaguar cars which have come out are beautiful," he said.

Since that first TR2 he has driven a series of BMWs, a Land Rover Discovery and helped his son to build a replica AC Cobra. He drove the XK 150 home before retiring to the local pub to celebrate with a pint of Guinness.



Winner Keith Pellen and his Jaguar XK 150: "You can always tell when you are driving an old car and all Jaguar cars are beautiful"

### SWISS ROLLS UP DRIVER'S TITLE



Alain Menu's Laguna on the way to his 11th victory

Alain Menu, the Swiss driver in his Williams Renault Laguna, who has dominated the season, wrapped up the 1997 British Touring Car Championship at Snetterton last weekend, even though there are still another six rounds to be raced. He scored his 11th race victory of the season to win the driver's title on his 34th birthday.

But the series is far from over for the Volvo team whose fortunes have been followed by CAR 97 readers. The cars prepared by TWR, whose other team Damon Hill's Arrows made such a tremendous impact at the Hungarian Grand Prix last week, are locked in battle for second place in the manufacturers' championship with reigning champions Audi and the fast-improving Honda team. Honda hold the spot now with 174 points against

Volvo's 163 and Audi's 162. Although the championship is not yet decided, Renault's 68-point lead now appears to be unassailable. The chase for the runners-up spot in the driver's championship is closer still. Volvo's lead driver, Rickard Rydell, is in fourth place only ten points behind Menu's team-mate Jason Plato and six behind reigning champion Frank Biela. At Snetterton he recorded two fifth places to stay well in the hunt for honours. Team-mate Kevin Burt failed to finish round 17 after a shunt with one of the Hondas, but managed eighth place in the second race of the day to add three points to his tally. He is now in tenth place in the driver's title race.

The next rounds will take place at the Thruxton circuit near Andover, Hampshire next weekend.

## An unhealthy policy

Vaughan Freeman on how the Budget could hit your insurance premiums

Motorists face higher premiums as insurers wake up to the impact that Labour's first Budget is about to have on their costs.

The Association of British Insurers believes the move will mean motorists involved in accidents will in effect be taxed twice for their hospital treatment, first through their taxes and again via their car insurance premiums.

Ironically, the nation's 25 million or so drivers breathed a collective sigh of relief when Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown finally sat down having delivered his first Budget in July. At first glance, it seemed to have left them relatively unscathed.

Brown had been expected to impose fresh financial penalties on drivers, particularly the company car driver, so the announcement of a mere 5% increase on the tax disc (which comes into effect in November), and a long anticipated 6 per cent hike in petrol and diesel fuel levies, meant most drivers felt they had escaped.

What few had noticed hidden away in the Budget was the announcement — the effects of which have only now been fully appreciated — that will cause the damage to premiums.

Regarding the National Health Service, Brown said: "We will also act to recoup in full the cost of treating road accidents from insurance companies. This, like the action we are taking against prescription fraud, shows our determination to ensure the NHS resources are focused on frontline care."

It means that hospitals and health centres in charge of the driver's premiums will now find it far easier to claim back the costs of treating road accident victims from the motorist involved. The costs are recouped on a no-fault basis. For example, if an uninsured pedestrian steps straight out in front of a motorist who is driving within the speed limit and perfectly properly, the cost



Crash: hospitals can now claim back treatment costs

of the pedestrian's treatment will be claimed back from the driver's insurance company.

The claim will not affect the driver's premiums directly, but long term the impact of more and more claims is certain to push premiums higher as insurance companies try to recoup their payments to the health service, says Sandy Dunn, managing director of the Touchline Insurance Company.

Hospitals can charge up to £2,949 for treating a road accident victim as an inpatient, up to £295 for outpatient care, and £21.30 for emergency treatment, including the cost of recovery by ambulance. Doctors called out to a road accident can also claim up to 41p per mile to cover their own motoring costs.

At present claims from hospitals and health centres to insurance companies are running at around £20 million a year, but that is expected to rise to up to £150 million a year in the wake of Brown's budget statement.

"Motorists who are already heavily taxed on and off the

road will simply end up paying an even higher levy to own a car," said Dunn. "This measure does not mirror the Government's principles only to increase taxes for those motorists who use their vehicles excessively. It will affect everyone."

"The industry has already had to raise premiums to meet the increasing cost of personal injury claims and to collect the rise in Insurance Premium Tax, which was increased from 2.5 to 4 per cent in April. Paying NHS charges will drive up motor insurance premiums even further and may lead motorists to compromise on the level of motor cover or, worse still, drive without insurance."

Suzanne Moore, spokesperson for the Association of British Insurers, said motorists now faced a double dose of tax, having already paid for hospital treatment through their tax, and again indirectly through the car insurance premiums.

Although the reclaim procedure had long been in place, Moore added that the Chancellor had now made the system far easier to use and that it was inevitable that more money would be claimed back from insurance firms: "It is something that is becoming more widely taken up as hospitals and health trusts dealing with their own budgets look for new ways of raising funds."

"If they all start claiming back these allowances it would bump up the amount that insurers were having to pay out, and if everything else remained equal that would push up claim costs and premiums to motorists."

The general advice for anyone about to renew their motor insurance is that they shop around as premiums can vary by hundreds of pounds. AA insurance spokesperson Becky Hadley said: "We would always advise motorists to shop around for the best quote. They might also try an insurance broker who will be able to find the lowest quote for them."

### AA GRIDLOCK GUIDE

● LONDON  
A205 Hammersmith Bridge. Closed both ways to general traffic.  
A406 Angel, Edmonton. Major works at the A1010 Fore Street.  
A237 Manor Road, Wallington. Single alternate traffic at the junction with Marlborough Road.  
A312 Fagge Road, Feltham. Carriageway reduced to one lane each way due to long term bridge maintenance at Fagge Bridge, north of Staines Road, between Barn and Spn.  
Richmond Park between Kingston Gate and Ham gate, closed for roadworks.

● SOUTH-EAST  
A34 Berkshire. Contraflow and narrow lanes with 40mph limit between M4 junction 13 and Newbury.  
A4 Padworth, Berkshire. Temporary lights at junction with A340.  
M40 Buckinghamshire. Long-term roadworks with a contraflow between junctions 14 (M25) and 15 (Weybridge East).  
A41 Watford. Eastbound lane closure on North Western Avenue from Hunton Bridge roundabout to Levensdon Green Interchange.  
A14 Hertfordshire. Roadworks on St Albans Road, Hemel Hempstead.  
M2 Rochester, Kent. Roadworks with various lane closures.

M40 Oxfordshire. Resurfacing work between Watlington and Oxford. Drivers heading to junction 8 of the M40 from Oxford are advised to use the A40 and A418.  
M25 Surrey. Restrictions and lane closures both ways between Hagley and A3.  
A24 Farnham Bypass. Lane closure northbound between Quadrangle and Long Furlong.

● SOUTH-WEST  
A38 Old Bedminster Bridge, Bedminster. Major roadworks with lane closures on Bedminster roundabout.  
M5 Bristol. Contraflow across Avonmouth bridge with 50mph limit.  
A432 Downend Road, Bristol. Temporary lights at junction with Crookes Hill and Struberry Road.  
A390 Cornwall. Lane restrictions in centre of Truro at the Trafalgar roundabout.  
A417 Malsome Bridge, Gloucestershire. Temporary lights during bridge work.

● MIDLANDS AND EAST ANGLIA  
A1 between Alconbury Hill and Alwalton, Cambridgeshire. Construction work with lane closures, contraflow and 50mph limit.  
A134 Stroud, Norfolk. Roadworks at A122 junction.  
A1074 Norwich. Narrow

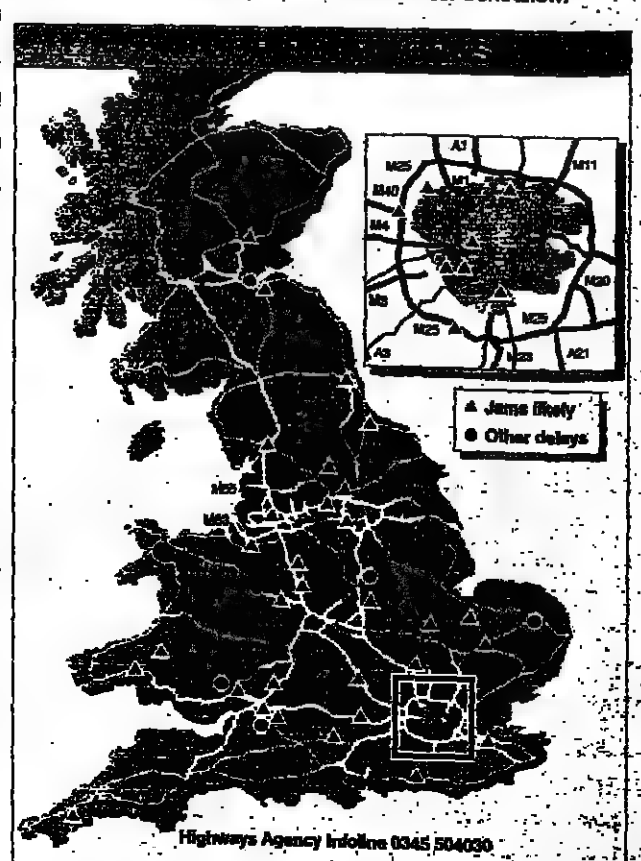
lanes eastbound between Lackman Lane and Sweet Road roundabout.  
A52 Beeston, Nottinghamshire. Major roadworks on Derby Road. Expect delays between Sherwin Arms and Priory roundabouts.  
A6 Leicestershire. Roadworks between M1 junction 24 and Sawley Island.  
M54 Shropshire. Contraflow with westbound traffic on the shoulder. Eastbound on to lanes 1 and 2 of westbound carriageway.  
A50 Stoke on Trent. Major roadworks in the Mill area at junction with A520.  
M6 Staffordshire. Contraflow between junctions 14 and 15.  
A1101 Mildenhall, Suffolk. closed at Kingsway between Lark Road and Kings Street.

● NORTH  
A578 Warrington, Warwick link road closed.  
M6 Cumbria. One-lane closed both ways between junctions 36 and 37.  
A58 West Yorkshire. Greater Manchester. Contraflow southbound on Park Road between A6 and Cliffe Way, and between the Chequerbent Roundabout and Wade Lane.

A19 between Thornaby-on-Tees and Billingham, Cleveland. Major roadworks with two lanes each way and 50mph limit.  
A65 between Skipton and Settle at Conistone Cold, North Yorkshire. Temporary lights following bridge damage.  
M1 South Yorkshire. Long-term roadworks with 30mph limit at junction 47. Delays expected on M1, M821 and A653.  
A134 Tyne and Wear. Contraflow on Felling bypass.  
M1 West Yorkshire. Junctions 43 to 42 Skipton to Lofthouse junction. Contraflow and 50mph limit.  
M62 West Yorkshire. Contraflow and 50mph limit between junctions 28 and 29.

● WALES  
A484 Carmarthenshire. Major roadworks on Francis Well in Tanyer.  
A449 Monmouthshire. Long delays between Usk junction and the M4 junction 24 at Newport with major roadworks in place.  
A472 Torfaen. Contraflow at Pontypool.  
A485 Carmarthenshire. Temporary lights at Ddar Vili, Llanvilyer.

● SCOTLAND  
M9 Edinburgh. Long-term roadworks and restrictions on Newbridge roundabout.  
A720 Edinburgh city bypass. Contraflow between Lothianburn and Dregthorn. On and off-ramps at Dregthorn closed.  
M90 Fife. Roadworks at Perth and Kinross. Contraflow.



A. James Kelly  
● Other delays

Highways Agency hotline 0345 304030

### AUTOFAX by Les Evans and David Long

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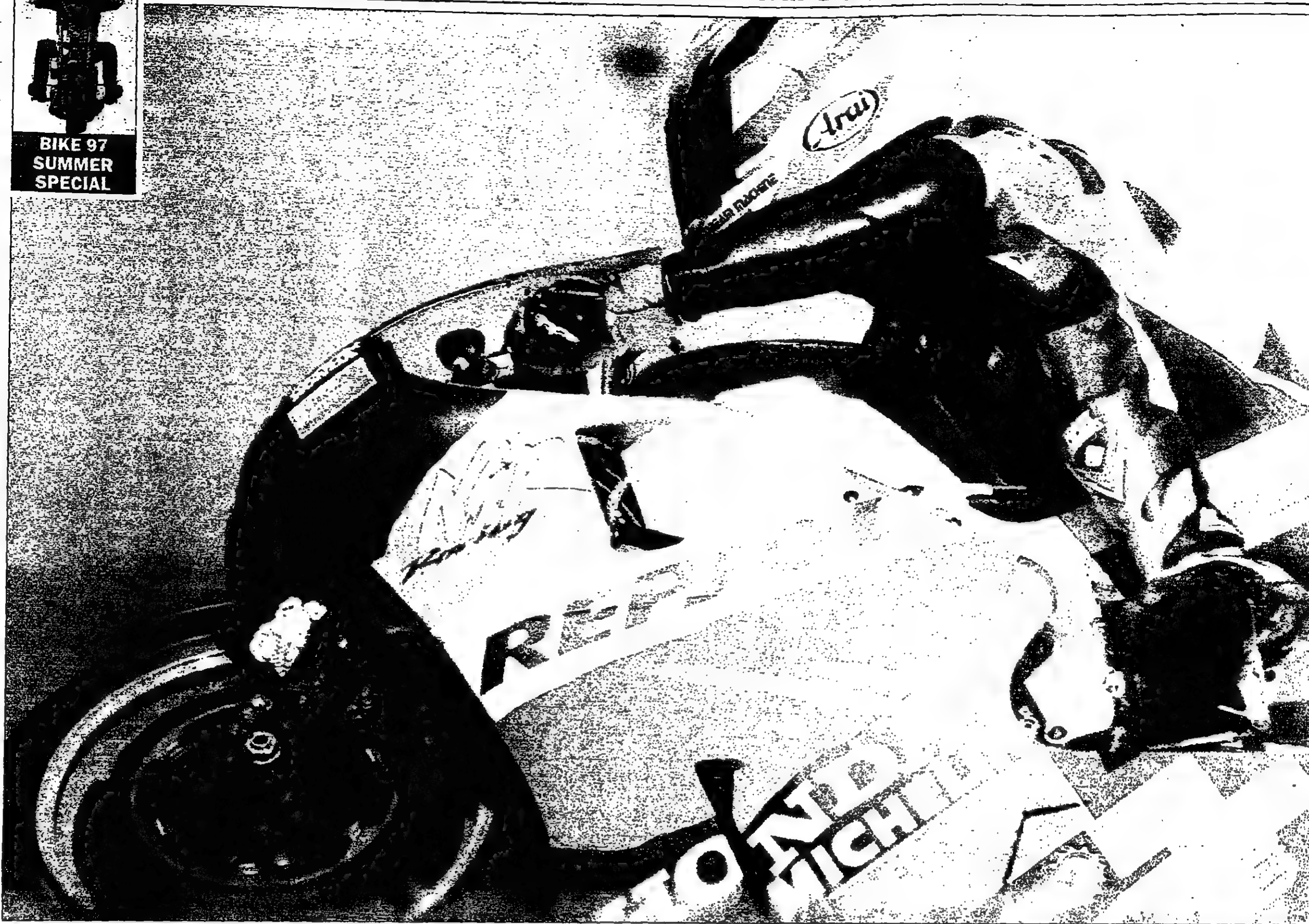
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## MOTORCYCLING MONTH: MAKING THE BIG TRIPS WITH BRITAIN'S LATEST PASSION



"To anyone but a handful of the world's best racers — none of whom can match the man who has won nine of this season's ten grands prix — the NSR is untameable"

# So much power, it's frightening

Even at 150mph, this crazy motorbike keeps on accelerating with a violence and a noise that chill the blood. My body is being thrust back into the seat-hump by its force; the stream of two-stroke exhaust noise rises and falls rapidly as my left foot tap-dances on the gearlever to keep the Honda NSR500 in its power band.

My arms are straining to hold the handlebars of this compact brute, trying to lift its front wheel off the track as it rockets towards its top speed of around 200mph.

To ride world champion Michael Doohan's Repsol Honda NSR500 is to enter a new, scary world of motorcycling. It doesn't matter how many fast bikes you've ridden before; taking the controls of the machine that Doohan will ride in tomorrow's 500cc Grand Prix at Donington Park is an experience like no other on two wheels.

You'd hardly think so to look at it. Apart from its world champion's No 1 plates and quartet of titanium exhaust pipes, the NSR looks remarkably similar to a roadgoing superbike such as Honda's CBR900RR FireBlade. It has a twin-beam aluminium frame

and single-shock rear suspension. Telescopic front forks hold a 17in wheel. Even under its carbon-fibre fairing, the NSR's 499cc V4 two-stroke engine, although unlike any roadgoing unit (partly because nothing similar would pass emissions tests), has carburetors instead of fuel-injection, and no traction control system to moderate its output.

But any apparent simplicity is misleading, for the NSR is a pure-bred, single-minded racing machine that has been refined over more than ten years into the fastest and most sophisticated motorcycle in the world. Honda is coy about precise figures, but the NSR produces close to 200bhp — far in excess of any roadster's output. Yet at just 130kg, this bike weighs less than a humble 125cc learner machine. Its chassis may look ordinary, but every component is built from exotic, lightweight materials and is the best that no money can buy.

In the hands of Australian ace Doohan, who needs only seventh place in tomorrow's race to secure his fourth consecutive 500cc world title, the NSR is a finely honed instrument that responds to every input — and even so, the

### Riding world champion Michael Doohan's Honda is like no other experience, says Roland Brown

bike is constantly at the very edge of control.

Doohan brakes so hard that the rear wheel leaves the ground. In corners he routinely controls a front-wheel slide — a crash, in any normal rider's terminology — with his knee, by pushing down on to the track. He exits the bends with his front wheel lifting and his wildly spinning rear slick tyre painting a black rubber line on the Tarmac.

To anyone but a handful of the world's best racers — none of whom can match the man who has won nine of this season's ten grands prix — the NSR is untameable. Even the best get mauled. Alex Criville, Doohan's team-mate and the only man to beat him this year, crashed at Assen in Holland in June and was badly injured when his NSR landed on his hand. A fall at the same circuit in 1992 cost Doohan that year's championship, and very nearly his right leg — at one stage, surgeons considered amputation.

I was reminded of that as I climbed aboard the Repsol-liveried Honda in the pit lane of the Eastern Creek circuit in Australia. Doohan's injury prevents him using a conventional right-foot brake lever, and chief technician Jerry Burgess pointed out the bike's special handlebar brake lever, alongside the clutch lever.

A mechanic pushed me down the pit-lane. I let out the clutch, the motor came to life with a rasping two-stroke exhaust crackle, and I headed out on to the unfamiliar circuit.

The great irony of the NSR500 is that it isn't difficult to ride at all. A dozen years or more ago, grand prix motorbikes were fussy, demanding creatures whose engines barely ran outside their narrow power bands. But as I negotiated a cautious first lap, it became clear that the lightweight Honda's forgiving handling was matched by the flexibility of its motor. From below 8,000rpm the NSR

poiled as hard as the fastest road bike, the power smooth and controllable.

But you don't ride an NSR500 like that — and a lap later, coming on to the downhill main straight, I opened the throttle properly. Suddenly the sleeping beast awakened and went on the rampage. The real power lies between 10,000 and 12,000rpm, and at such revs the NSR isn't like a road bike at all. In third gear at over 100mph, the front wheel snapped off the ground, then did the same thing in fourth as I held the throttle wide open and changed up through the semi-automatic gearbox, which cuts the ignition momentarily.

As the straight disappeared in seconds, it was as much as I could do to hold on and pull myself forward to keep some weight over the front wheel. There was no room to approach the NSR's 200mph top speed, but I was travelling at over 180mph before braking for the next bend. And if the NSR's acceleration was fearsome, the stopping power provided by its carbon-fibre discs and Michelin front slick tyre (I ignored both rear

brake levers, thanks) was no less so. The Honda threw so much weight on my arms that I was reminded why Doohan's upper-body strength is legendary even among his rivals.

In the bends the NSR's control, balance and ease of steering was almost surreal; certainly, no road bike will feel up to standard again. No matter how hard I tried — and I was cornering fast enough to wear out a fair bit of knee-scraper — the NSR refused even to twitch. Its rigid frame and state-of-the-art suspension simply allowed the bike to react perfectly to every rider command.

Doohan, of course, rides so hard that the bike is bucking around on every lap, as he slides the rear tyre to get maximum drive on to the next straight. "Keep the revs above 10,000rpm," he had warned. "If it spins at 8,000rpm, you'll be over the bars for sure."

But such heroics are for the chosen few only. For anyone else, riding the NSR500 is a humbling experience. My handful of laps over, I cruised back to the pits — stunned by the Honda's speed, but with no more idea than before of what the world's finest racebike is like at its limit.



Brown with Jerry Burgess, Doohan's chief technician

### REPSOL HONDA NSR500

Engine: 110-degree V4, 2-stroke, 499cc produces approx 195bhp at 12,000rpm.  
Transmission: Six-speed gearbox. Chain final drive.  
Performance: 0-60mph, approx two secs; max. 200mph.  
Price: Not for sale. For selected factory riders only.

## Mike's very quick one for the road

### Vaughan Freeman meets the speed record breaker with numberplates (but no mirrors)

Think of the motorway speed limit, triple it, add a bit more, and you're getting close to the speeds Mike Grainger reaches on his awesome street-legal motorcycle.

Mike's bike might look like an out-of-the-shop standard Kawasaki, and around Devon he can be seen burbling around on it to and from work. Yet this is a motorcycle that has been timed at 222mph flat out, and has just broken the British and European land speed records for machines in its class.

For the record-breaking attempt Mike took his Kawasaki ZZ-R1100 to the Elvington airfield near York. Taking a somewhat eccentric approach to his record-breaking, he made just one concession to travelling at light aircraft speeds — he removed the mirrors.

As he hurtled down the runway, Mike reached 212mph, with an average speed for the record of 209.05mph, measured with a flying start over two quarter-mile sprints.

Only a strong cross-wind he says prevented him adding an extra 15mph, but it was more than enough to give him the Category A1 national record for solo machines up to 1300cc, plus the European record.

Mike, 46, started his motorcycling career in 1966 on a BSA 250cc that cost him £15; on a good day he aspired to 65mph. Back then motorcycling meant Mods and Rockers, Triumphs and Nortons, black leather, white silk scarves, and woolly fishermen's socks rolled over the boot tops. For any motorcyclist of the times "Doing the ton" was the ultimate dream. A "double ton" was pure science fiction.

Some 30 years later Mike, who runs GT Motorcycles, with outlets in Torbay and Plymouth, turned fiction into fact with his Kawasaki. Even in

ordinary form the ZZ-R1100 is an impressive 1,050cc machine, capable of 174mph and costing £10,000. Of his beefed-up 1,100cc version, he says: "The motorcycle is a fairly standard ZZ-R1100, except that I have fuel injected it, and put on a turbo charger which has taken the power to something like 350bhp on the rear wheel. Given all the development work we have done on it, it is probably worth around £20,000."

"It is still very much a road bike and still very usable. I ride it around town, although at under 30mph the engine runs a little unevenly and is slightly hesitant, but once it is rolling is fine."

"It is fast though. If you try a standing quarter of a mile on it your front wheel will still be off the ground at the end of the run through the

acceleration. It will go from 0 to 60mph in under two seconds, and travel the length of a football pitch in less than a second."

His other records include that for a 900cc production machine with a "flying start" 162.44mph over one kilometre, and the production machine record for a 900cc, with a standing start over one mile, returning an average speed of 125.8mph, both done on Kawasakis.

What has proved so satisfying about his latest record is that it was set not on a purposely designed out-and-out racing or dragster-type motorcycle, but on a standard road-going machine, complete with numberplate, lights and indicators.

What does his wife, Sue, make of it all? "I think she has got used to it. The record attempt was a bit risky, but not a lot more dangerous than riding on the road. Things can go wrong anytime, but I check the bike carefully before every run. It is risky, but so is walking across the road."



High standard: Mike's ZZ-R1100



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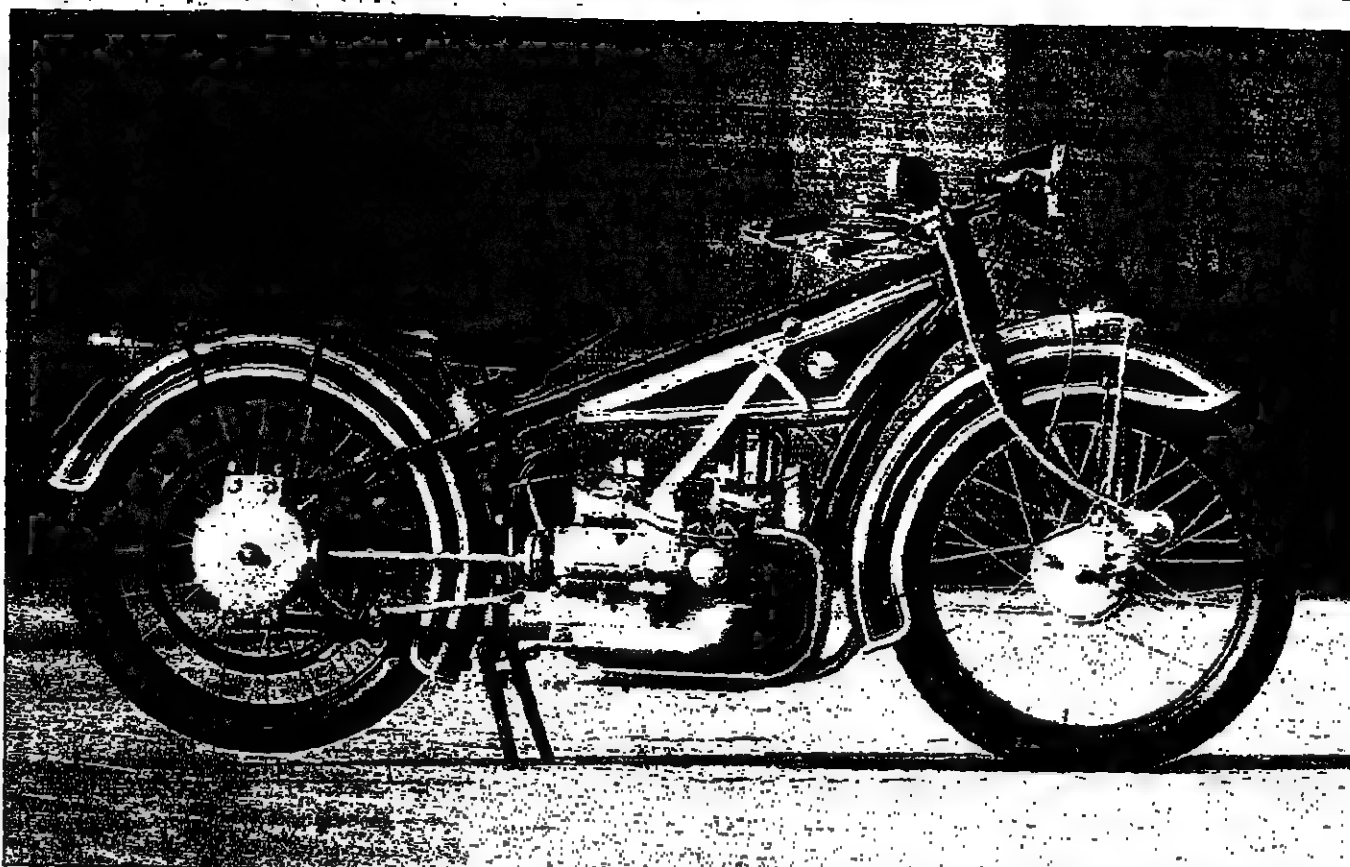
  
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With the R32, designed by former Daimler engineer Max Friz in 1922, the BMW layout was born and lives on in the R1200 C

## Champion boxer at 75

Classic motorcycle engines have a habit of sticking around: Harley-Davidson has its long-serving in-line V-twin, Moto Guzzi traditionally uses a V-twin mounted across the frame—and BMW has the famous two-cylinder boxer.

It's the motor that founded the BMW motorcycling tradition, the one they use on their superbikes today, and is also the cornerstone of the German vehicle-builder. For BMW's first motorcycle made its world debut in October 1923 at the Paris Motor Show, some five years before the Bavarian manufacturer ever built a car.

The company started life as an aero-engine manufacturer, but the Treaty of Versailles banned Germany from building aircraft, so the firm turned to developing its first motorcycle engine in 1921. From the word go it was a two-cylinder boxer, but the 500cc unit was

BMW built bikes before cars. John Naish looks at how the Treaty of Versailles began a distinguished history

only fitted to Nuremberg bike-maker Victoria's machines.

When Victoria stopped making bikes, BMW decided to build its own, and in 1922, former Daimler engineer Max Friz was charged with designing BMW's first bike. Thus, 75 years ago, the classic BMW layout was born.

Victoria had placed the engine lengthways across the frame, but Friz turned it around, so that the cylinders stuck out on both sides in the cooling air. And because the crankshaft now ran down the length of the frame, Friz was able to equip the new bike, the R32, with a relatively straightforward shaft-drive system.

The same configuration is at the heart of the new R1200 C cruiser we are giving away, as

well as the rest of BMW's range of high-performance boxer twins—but they've had the benefit of more than seven decades' development.

Back at the Paris Motor Show, however, public reaction to the new German design was mixed. Some feared that the engine's cylinders would inevitably become damaged in an accident. Others criticised the low power output—only 8.5bhp (The R1200 C's detuned engine, by comparison, puts out 61bhp).

Nevertheless, the R32 was strong on torque. The design's low centre of gravity meant it was stable at its 56mph top speed, and the marque won a reputation for reliability that

justified the high price: the R32 sold 3,000 units by 1926.

The boxer was soon to shake off its reputation for low power. In 1929, BMW broke the world motorcycle speed record using a supercharged 750cc engine to reach 134mph.

And in 1937, a supercharged 500cc machine hit 173mph, a record that was to last for 14 years. Racetrack successes were being racked up, too, with BMW scooping both the European Championship and the Isle of Man TT in 1938.

The Second World War left BMW starting from scratch. Initially, the Allies only let the firm build single-cylinder bikes: the world had to wait until 1950 for another 500cc boxer twin. While the company looked set for an immedi-

ate renaissance, with the 1954 sports-oriented RS achieving 125mph performance, the motorcycle market slumped in the 1960s, with only 4,700 motorcycles being built in 1969.

The slide was reversed in the 1970s, with classic models such as the luxurious and expensive R90S—still with the boxer motor—firmly establishing BMW as a top-marque for touring.

But 1983 saw the introduction of an in-line four-cylinder range, followed by in-line three-cylinder machines in 1986. That was not the end of the boxers: instead the configuration was completely overhauled in 1993, with a new four-valve engine with electronic ignition and combined oil/air cooling.

The boxer fights on, and it's still a winner: this year 60 per cent of BMW's motorcycle sales come powered by that familiar twin-cylinder layout.

## This is the house that John built

Michael Jackson reviews a new, somewhat selective, history of Triumph bikes

Books about Triumph contain the potential to stir the emotions more profoundly than those about their contemporaries; even more so, surprisingly, than the equally ubiquitous raft of Harley Davidson publications.

Thus I was eagerly anticipating an emotional stir from John Tipler's *Triumph Motorcycles: Their Renaissance and the Hinckley Factory*, the first hardback covering the remarkable 12-year reconstruction by John Bloor, an enigmatic Staffordshire housebuilder. In little more than a decade not only has he designed, developed, and produced an acceptably modern large capacity modular range of motorcycles, he has shoehorned them into the world marketplace alongside Honda, Harley, BMW, Ducati et al. And all sans Government subsidy, City venture capital or advice from Harvey-Jones.

Triumph's manufacturing processes and final model specifications are assiduously chronicled. The lavishly equipped factory is predominantly staffed by thirtysomethings and the whole complex is unquestionably "buzzing". But Tipler, somehow, just fails to stir the emotions. Triumph extended its operation and he spent requisite time observing/reporting upon the sophisticated production infrastructure. Consistently written, then, but composed more in the style of an articulate editor of an owners' club magazine than, say, Iacocca's opus on Chrysler.

The two burning questions are the firm's bottom line, and Bloor's motivation. Sadly, neither are addressed. In the opening two chapters many of the ingredients of the company's colourful past are adeptly condensed, and with fair accuracy, since the original Triumphs first stirred on to the streets of Coventry in 1902. Consider this soupcon of historical ingredients:

Between the wars J.Y. Sangster buys Triumph, giving Edward Turner, mercurial MD/chief designer, a free hand to design the groundbreaking 500cc Speed Twin in 1938. Postwar, Turner creates the Thunderbird and Bonneville, but, following Sir Bernard Dicker's dramatic departure from BSA, an enforced linking with the Birmingham Small Arms colossus begins to sow the seeds of destruction. Meanwhile, Marlon Brando, the



Tipler's tale: conscientiously told, but somehow it fails to stir the emotions

Metropolitan Police, Elvis Presley, Steve McQueen, Lord Snowdon—all the list goes on—all endorse the product they ride.

Triumph gains the land speed record in Utah at 214mph, then scoops the prestigious Daytona 200 several times. Later, a muddled Department of Trade and Industry partly underwrites a "takeover" by a barely rejuvenated Norton Villiers, which, unwittingly, hammers more nails into all the residual British motorcycle coffins. Anthony Wedgwood Benn, Lord Stokes, and Geoffrey Robinson pledge themselves to a workers' cooperative venture to keep Triumph in the market, but in 1983 it expires. RIP.

Such was the "provenance" Bloor purchased. A communication blackout ensued for the next six years while the umbilical link with traditional Triumph "baggage" was severed. This sensible move allowed the embryo company an uncluttered run-up to the global launch of the all-new range of seriously oil-proof multis at the Cologne Show in 1990. A seamless momentum began.

Given Triumph's almost Teutonic obsession with "doing it right, from scratch", one ponders the product to which it aspires beyond the millennium? Ultimately, of course, John Bloor could evolve into as successful a maker of motorcycles as he is a builder of houses. That will be the moment for the definitive book on the subject.

The writer was Director, Norton Triumph Europe 1973-76.  
\*Crowood Auto Classic, £19.95.

► REWARDING TIMES ◀

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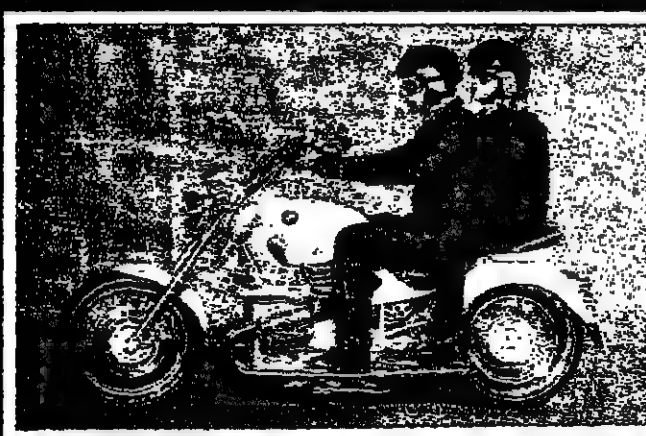
Starting today, *The Times*, in association with BMW Motorcycles, gives you the chance to win the fabulous new R1200C, the first Cruiser motorcycle ever produced by BMW, worth more than £10,000. Our winner will also receive free BMW Insurance up to the value of £750, so getting onto the open road will be even easier. (See our front page road test.)

The stylish Cruiser will be available at BMW's UK motorcycle dealers this September. It is based on the modern two-cylinder, four-valve engine and Telelever suspension technology of the new Boxer generation, and provides a novel mixture of leading edge technology with distinctive Cruiser design.

It is a bike with style and attitude, designed to give you a taste of the open road. The laid-back appearance of the R1200C is emphasised by the high, raked handlebars and the low seat height of 29.1 inches (740mm).

Reflecting the typical character of a cruiser, the larger 1170cc flat twin Boxer engine has been designed to produce extra torque at low speeds, rather than for maximum power.

And that is not all. BMW has also launched a whole new range of fashionable clothing and accessories to go with it.



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THE TIMES











# All the better after another 8,000 miles

**Jim Murray with Zara, left, and Zoe: "We step out of our front door sometimes and the pollution just sits there"**

**I**f the Government wants the air to be cleaned up, it has to encourage private motorists and companies to go for it by reducing the duty on Citydiesel.

"Drivers with ordinary diesel in their tank can top it up with Citydiesel with no problems, and this in turn gives them a cleaner engine that will work more efficiently."

Around 25 per cent of London buses already use Citydiesel and Greenway

says: "We are hoping now that the Government will cut the duty on this fuel."

The increasing popularity of Citydiesel could be the white knight to save diesel, once hailed as the great environmental saviour because diesel-engined cars covered more miles per gallon than petrol.


Regular diesel has suffered a bad press following the publication of recent studies. These have shown that as well as emitting around 90 per cent

fewer of the fine particles than petrol-fitted cars, the association found that toxic pollution from road transport has dropped roughly 25 per cent since 1992, when the catalyst was introduced on new cars.

There was no room, however, for complacency said Martin Maeso, head of the AA's Environmental Policy: "The fact that we must use to focus attention on the small minority of gross polluters that litter our roads and to drive the 10 per cent of vehicles that cause half of all vehicle pollution off the road."



**BMW 325i Touring: sporty, v**

[illegible]



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# Putting the family on four wheels

THE Austin Seven, renowned for bringing car ownership within reach of working-class pockets, first emerged from the Longbridge works in Birmingham 75 years ago. This milestone in motoring history is being celebrated by the devoted owners of many of Sir Herbert Austin's surviving Chummies, Opals, Pearls and Rubies, as

the Seven was variously and affectionately known. More than 80 Sevens set out today on a two-week tour of France, including 14 brought from Australia. They plan to cover 1,400 miles in stately rather than record-breaking style. **Ronald Faax** looks back on a motor car of simple excellence that is internationally admired.

**D**esigned in great secrecy on the billiard table at Lickey Grange, Sir Herbert Austin's home near Birmingham, when his company was on the verge of bankruptcy, the Austin Seven put more families on to four wheels than any other car of its day. More than 300,000 were sold between 1922 and 1939 in more than 320 variants.

I reckoned it to be the biggest car in the world, with lustrous black, stove-enamelled wings and headlights large enough for a lighthouse. That was how our succession of Sevens appeared to me as a three-year-old. The car spelt travel, excitement and the seaside and we can still visit the dent in a fence my father made in his search for reverse gear. The roof of one was torn off by an aircraft coming in to land on Southport beach.

Sir Herbert made rough drawings on the billiard table and handed them to Stanley Edge, an 18-year-old engineering draughtsman seconded from the Austin works for the project. Three prototypes were produced, the first abandoned because it hopped like a kangaroo. The successful version was unveiled at Claridge's in July 1922 and exhibited at the Motor Show the following October. Sir Herbert had pushed ahead with his plans against the doubts and criticism of some fellow directors and, at £225, the car proved an immediate success. Growing numbers and a more efficient assembly line brought the price down to £165. The early attempts to ridicule the "motorised pram" or "soap box on wheels" rebounded and became terms of endearment rather than ridicule.

Bernard Griffiths of the

Austin Seven Clubs' Association, says that 3,500 Sevens are registered and probably 6,000 survive worldwide. "They are immensely tough little cars, designed to be put right by the village blacksmith and to last a long time. People have driven them round the world and they rally from Land's End to John O'Groats. They spawned other cars, among them the first Lotus, BMW and, in a convoluted way, the first Land Rover. I think it was Campbell got 100 miles an hour out of one on the Daytona salt flats. There were supercharged Ulsters,

**'It was, even in its day, simple yet rugged and gave inexpensive, available transport'**

open top sports, box saloons; many, many varieties that shared the same basic chassis and engine," he says. The Seven offers the cheapest and most convenient way into classic car ownership. Spare parts remain plentiful while repairs are beyond the village blacksmith. A relic in need of full restoration may be found, if you are lucky, for a few hundred pounds. A working runner requiring no more than tender loving care would be around £3,000, but an

immaculately restored example of Seven exotica, such as the top-of-the-range Chummy or a Gordon England Sunshine Saloon, might fetch up to £9,000.

Griffiths says the reason for the Seven's continuing appeal is simple: "They were a part of just about everybody's past. It was, even in its day, simple yet rugged and gave inexpensive, available transport. It was overloaded, abused, repaired by Heath Robinsons, but still kept going."

Sevens regularly clock up 200,000 miles and are said to give their best when about to die. The 780cc side valve engine produced 10 brake horse power at around 4,000rpm and, unless they are regularly maintained, the brakes are said to require written notice to perform an emergency stop. Motor manufacturers of the day had views on braking performance. Sir Herbert insisted that good brakes encouraged furious driving, while Ettore Bugatti ducked responsibility when the braking performance of his cars was criticised: "I build cars to go, not to stop."

**Light Car and Cyclecar** found it "an energetic little car" which clung to the road confidently. Though the brakes were never "startlingly sudden", the car handled Birdlip hill with a following wind at 15mph with no signs of steaming. The first road test of the Austin Seven in *The Autocar* began by describing the car as a miracle, doing so much so well for so little cost.

Which is how Rosemary Spence, wife of the vicar of Kirkbride in Cumbria, feels about the 1936 Opal open tourer she has owned for 15 years. The car had spent all its life in the Isle of Man and was



Rosemary Spence in her Austin Seven Opal: "It has been a very cheap way into owning a classic car as a hobby"

therefore a very low mileage model.

"I potter about in it. If we're caught out in the rain, the water tends to leak in where the brake handle goes through the floor and through gaps in the side screens, but otherwise it is pretty watertight. It has been a very cheap way into owning a classic car as a hobby," she says.

We potter out with the hood down and the breeze whistling past the upright little windscreen. Sir Herbert was no aerodynamicist and the early Sevens have the streamline qualities of a brick.

We reach 35mph and, as the hedgerows unwind, the little car gives an impression of

being on rails. Most Sevens have only three gears, but the Opal has the luxury of a fourth which made little real difference to performance. The engine ticks along like a proper sewing machine and the transmission and gearbox grumble contentedly. For the first time in many years, I double declutch into second gear approaching a junction. There is a slight grinding of cogs and the trafficator — all the rage among safety-conscious motorists in the Thirties — flips out like a salute as we round a bend.

"I got up to 50 once with a following wind. Not a speed that you would think twice about in a modern car, but quite exciting in a Seven," Mrs Spence says. "If Malcolm Campbell got more than 100 out of one, I wouldn't have liked to have been in it."

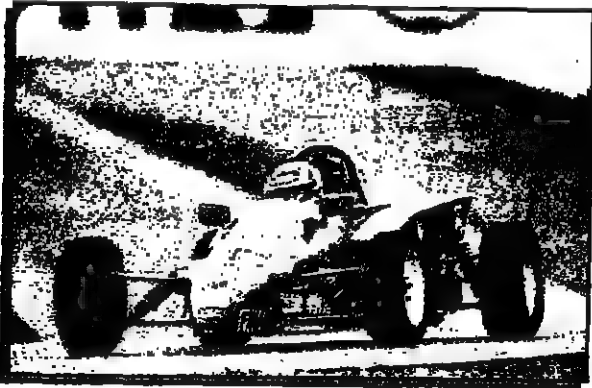


Early Austin Seven advertising: the legendary car has now become an ageless classic

## EXCLUSIVE TIMES SPORTS OFFER

# Brands Hatch Motor Racing Day

## Tuesday 26 August



The Times and Brands Hatch have teamed up to offer readers an exclusive interactive event-day where you will spend the day driving a variety of racing vehicles with full tuition. For only £165 per person, this price shows a superb saving on the usual price. You will be entertained in a private suite as well as out on the race circuit where you will race against the clock - this is guaranteed to be a day to remember.

### NIGEL MANSELL RACING SCHOOL

This is the Brands Hatch flagship product, and allows you to experience the thrill of driving a single seater racing car on an international circuit. After an initial briefing on safety and racing techniques you will be coached by an experienced instructor in a BMW 318i before embarking on laps in a Formula First single seater.

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The four wheelers provide all the fun of a motor cross bike with none of the instability. That said you will need to hang on to the handlebars as you pilot your vehicle round an obstacle course of see-saws, jumps and slippery corners in a frantic run against the clock.

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Honda Pilots, Desert Stars, Karting Grand Prix, Quad Bikes and Caterham Autotest contest.

Afternoon tea with presentation ceremony and trophies for the winner of each event.

# Cheered to the echo at the wheel of a Wartburg

**A**s Saturday dawned at London City airport and we boarded a flight to Mönchengladbach we reflected on the challenge we were about to undertake. Two British journalists in an East German car for 1,250 miles in the "2000km durch Deutschland", a classic car rally that this year attracted more than 180 cars and 15 classic motorcycles.

On arrival, my co-driver, Matt, and I were introduced to our car — a Wartburg, a curious vehicle with a 1 litre 2-stroke 3-cylinder engine. Our rivals were widely varied. In addition to the vast number of Mercedes and BMWs there were also several American

**A classic cross-Germany rally is not for the faint-hearted, but it's a great way to travel, says Claire Furnell**

cars, a couple of Auto Unions and Lagondas, even a three-wheel Morgan and the oldest car in the event — a 1925 Bollnase Morris.

With the first car to leave on Sunday morning at 7.30 we were all up for the first of many barn swims in the hotel pool before heading for Frankfurt via the spa town of Baden-Baden. All went well until Artie the Wartburg, as he had become known by us, stalled in the traffic and refused point blank to restart. We pushed him into a nearby garage and called out the AVD, Germany's version of

too far wrong. At every point we visited, people were out in force.

We began Monday at 7.45 in Frankfurt on a 394km day to head toward our finish at Stuttgart via the spa town of Baden-Baden. All went well until Artie the Wartburg, as he had become known by us, stalled in the traffic and refused point blank to restart. We pushed him into a nearby garage and called out the AVD, Germany's version of

the RAC, two hours later the problem was diagnosed as water in the carburettor and solved.

On Wednesday we had a short trip of only 272km to Dresden. We had few problems and made all the checkpoints and everywhere the reaction was the same — *Vartburg, Vartburg!* screamed the crowds. People patted the car and shook our hands, asked for autographs and showered us with gifts.

The start in Dresden on Thursday morning was delayed until 10 o'clock to allow competitors to take in the sights of the beautiful town. From then it was on to Magdeburg for the evening. Friday began cold and gloomy with the rain that had already caused the evacuation of some German towns apparently heading our way. By lunch time we had reached Hanover and enjoyed our lunch before heading on to make our way to Bad Wildungen, but after not too long the driving rain and bad roads saw the end of our rally in a ditch and although not badly hurt we finished our journey that day by train. Several other cars had also had problems due to the weather, but no one was seriously hurt.

Saturday saw the remaining competitors make the 443km journey back to Mönchengladbach, where a great deal of sponsor Geldermann's champagne was being consumed to celebrate the end of a successful and well organised rally.

This is a great way to enjoy your classic car and to see Germany, the crowds, the people and the scenery. But with stages up to 500km, it is hard work. Navigation is relatively easy to understand — just take a phrase book — but you must keep your wits about you at every turn so as not to lose your way.

It's not as famous as the Mille Miglia, but if you want to test your classic car over more than two days, the 2,000km is a good challenge.



A 1948 BMW Isotta 150, left, and a Holden all the way from Sydney near Baden-Baden



Our 1963 Wartburg 311 de luxe — nicknamed Artie — which drove the crowd wild

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# RELAIS & CHATEAUX



## A truly memorable feast for all of the senses

With its head in the snow-capped Alps and its toe almost touching Africa, Italy is many countries in one. Piedmont, Liguria and Emilia-Romagna were the places I knew best, and when I visited Puglia for the first time, I hardly knew where I was.

Its little whitewashed villages, hard on the eye in the midday sun, set against a turquoise Adriatic, could have been Greece. And, indeed, this was once part of Magna Graecia. An area of dense settlements, both inland and coastal, Puglia, and its capital, Bari, has always been an important agricultural, maritime and mercantile province on the ancient trade routes from the East to Europe.

The landscape is dotted with fortified farmhouses, or *masseria*. You might wonder why a farmhouse should be fortified, but this is an ancient area of settlement prone to attack by the Saracens in the Middle Ages.

Il Melograno is one such *masseria*, just a few kilometres inland from Monopoli, and not far from Ostuni to the south and Polignano to the north. It is large enough in itself to resemble a small

**ITALY**  
**Francis Bissell**  
tries the varied  
and spectacular  
delights of Puglia

Greek village. Outhouses have been restored to provide delightfully secluded guest accommodation, so that you can have breakfast outside your own front door, under a gnarled and twisted olive tree. The farmhouse is now a small, beautiful, luxurious hotel, where the Guerro family have made a determined effort to keep the style Pugliese. This extends to the cooking done by Maurice Barnaba, born in France to Pugliese parents, who have accompanied him "back home" to their retirement.

The beaches of the Adriatic are nearby; the hotel has its own private beach and a fitness centre. And there is much to see in the medieval coastal towns. Further inland is the *trulli* capital of the world, Alberobello, where there are

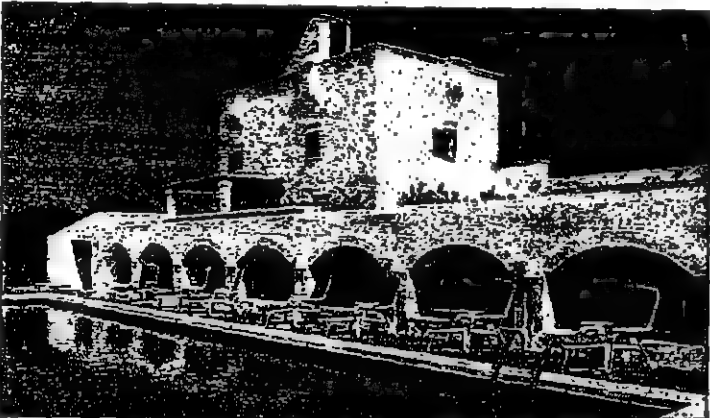
more than a thousand of these small conical dwellings.

It is awfully tempting just to stay put and enjoy the lovely estate, with its pomegranate and almond trees, and the delightful citrus grove. And the food here is well worth investigating. The Pugliese diet is based on bread, pasta, vegetables, fish and shellfish — the ideal Mediterranean diet, in fact. It is accompanied by the peppery oils from ancient olive trees, and washed down with full-bodied red wines from the Salentino, and aromatic whites from Locorotondo.

The simplest cooking methods are employed. Fish will be grilled whole or, if filleted, the fillets will be wrapped in foil, or parchment parcels with little in the way of aromatics, perhaps just salt and pepper, a squeeze of lemon juice and a little olive oil, and it will then be baked. Much of the shellfish is served raw, and you might try a heap of sea urchins — a divine feast.

One of the most striking dishes was the *mozzarella*. Always made that day from fresh buffalo milk, it bore no resemblance to the variety found in the UK. Creamy, elastic and soft, it was always the first thing we ate with the lovely crusty bread. The meal might then move on to a range of *salume*, cured meats, and *antipasto*, preserved in oils and vinegars, such as tomatoes, small aubergines, anchovies, mushrooms, peppers and *lampascioni*, a bitter wild bulb highly prized in the region.

At Il Melograno the chef cooks a *marvellous orecchiette con braciolo di vitellino, manzo e pollo* — a steaming, hot, hearty rustic plateful of the local, ear-shaped pasta, meat rolls, and a deep, rich savoury sauce. It is as honest and authentic as his *puré di fave con cicoria*, a purée of white beans with bitter greens, served in two heaps in an earthenware bowl.



Il Melograno: swim or relax on a lounger by the poolside.

## Tuck into the breakfast, and lunch be damned

It's quite hard to see from the map just where Connemara begins, but you know when you get there. Beyond Galway, towards the western tip of the western Gaeltacht, or Irish-speaking area, the landscape becomes more open, punctuated by small hills and deep, peaty brown pools. Your eye catches the occasional slow movement of sheep ambulating over the tussocks of coarse grass, or a brief flash of a hawk overhead.

We drove on the coast road from Galway, and it took forever, it seemed, to go only two inches on the map, round bays and lagoons and over headlands. Tucked away deep in a sheltered bay, surrounded by a lush, almost tropical garden, we came upon Cachel House and the McEvilly family.

The term "Irish hospitality" is almost tautology, but here it is to be found in abundance.

It was early afternoon when we arrived, and Kay McEvilly showed us to our rooms, knowing instinctively that we did not want a late lunch, and sent us a tray of afternoon tea. The room, with its large windows and green furnishings, was almost an extension of

**IRELAND**  
**Francis Bissell**  
savours soda bread,  
fried bread, bacon,  
eggs and bangers

the garden, supremely comfortable and cossetting, and the ideal place to contemplate dinner.

Dining in Ireland is better than ever, and at Cachel House you will taste the most exquisite food imaginable; not fancy and sophisticated food, but dishes made from prime, fresh local and seasonal ingredients. The lobster is very fine indeed, as is the local crab.

Vegetables are full of flavour, and are shown to their best advantage in the one or two soups on the daily menu and the vegetable dish, which might be a red onion tart with carrot sauce, or a savoury strudel with port wine sauce. Herb gardens are very much a feature of Irish country houses, and this is reflected in its

cooking. The night we were there, Dermot McEvilly cooked a memorable *celery and lovage soup* for dinner. Sweet, fine-grained Connemara lamb is a real treat, as are the plump, briny oysters from Galway Bay and the locally caught salmon, which they smoke themselves.

Home-made soda bread is served at every meal, and is far better than biscuits with all the luscious, creamy Irish farmhouse cheeses now being made, each as individual as the people who make them: the Fergusons' Gubbeen, Jeffa Gill's Durrus, Jim and Brenda Maher's Cooleeney and many more besides.

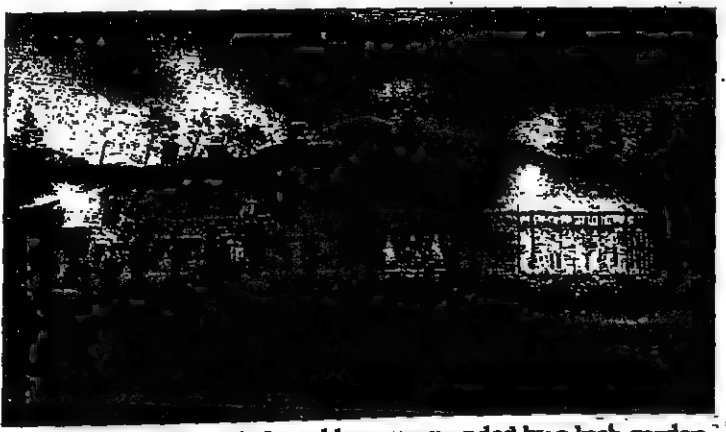
Desserts centre on home-made ice creams, tarts, cakes and seasonal fruit: one menu offers warm gooseberry tart, gratin of summer cherries or fresh strawberries or raspberries with cream.

Mixed drinks usually hold little appeal, but I found the thought of sipping a black velvet while reading the menu quite irresistible. The only thing better would have been a glass of draught Guinness — and to drink Guinness in Ireland is definitely a three-star attraction. If as much care were taken with pouring wine as is taken over drawing a pint of draught Guinness, the Irish hospitality industry would, without a doubt, have the finest wine service in the world.

Breakfast at Cachel House is not to be missed: free-range eggs, mildly cured local bacon, heavenly black pudding and white pudding, a few grilled mushrooms and tomatoes for good measure, and some fried bread and sausage.

Tea is the perfect companion to this little lot. And there must be something about the water that makes tea in Ireland taste so good.

Leave room for soda bread, toast and home-made jams and marmalade. Don't even think about lunch.



Cachel House: in a sheltered bay, surrounded by a lush garden



Jean-Michel Bodinaud and his wife Luce have turned Château de Nieul, a 16th-century hunting lodge, into the ultimate getaway

## Fairytale tour in the land of châteaux

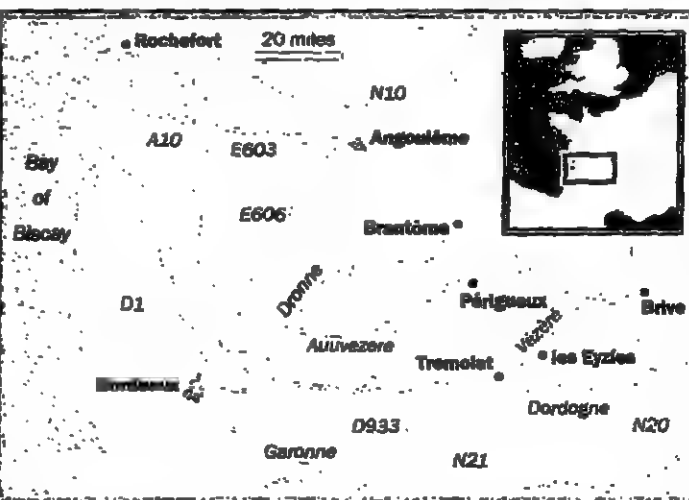
We tore apart our first croissant on board Eurostar. We passed our first host of sunflowers heading northeast from Angoulême, and took our first sip of champagne in the late afternoon sun against the backdrop of a fairytale château.

Slipping elegantly into a lifestyle of canapés "à la terrasse" and water-thin petits fours "dans le salon, s'il vous plaît", we toasted the week ahead. With ten francs to the pound, we had picked a perfect time to motor idly through the southwest of France, with my sister-in-law at the wheel of a hire car from Hertz. Wending our way between some of the most magnificent hotels in the world, our passport was Relais & Châteaux.

Jean-Michel Bodinaud was smiling, arms outstretched to greet us, on the stone steps of his 16th-century hunting lodge. The turreted pile, reached by a long winding drive, originally belonged to his grandfather. Since then, the ebullient owner and his wife Luce, the masterful chef de cuisine, have turned Château de Nieul into the ultimate luxury getaway. For the true escapists, there is even a moat and a well-worn helicopter pad in the 80-acre woodland surrounding the country retreat. "This is big, but this is not so big," exclaimed M. Bodinaud, alluding to the fact that his impressive hotel has a homely appeal for the eclectic group of casually dressed families and glamorous young couples who congregate every summer at the château. Celebrity pop group Blur were among them recently.

Armed with a gourmet's picnic, adventurous guests can explore the surrounding countryside and small villages from one of the hotel's open-topped Jeeps. Tennis, swimming, a ten-acre pond for fishing, and an art gallery housed in converted stables, are all within a toss of a croissant from the family-owned castle. With birdsong as the only background noise, we watched green-fingered staff work unhurried in the Bodinauds' walled-vegetable garden, tending

Morag Preston takes Eurostar and a hire car to sample the good life of rich food and fine wines in southwest France



to the produce in the balmy heat. (The complimentary *fleur de courgette*, painstakingly stuffed with salmon mousse, rarely fails to raise a smile in the hotel's superb dining room.) We caught star-gazing strollers stealing midnight walks in the ornamental flower garden in front of the hotel.

En route to our next destination, we made a whirlwind tour of Château de La Rochefoucauld overlooking the Tardoire river. Heading south towards the bustling village of Brantôme, called the Venice of the Périgord because of its many canals, we arrived at Le Moulin de L'Abbaye with a thirst for afternoon tea. A 15th-century mill, a miller's house and a former abbot's residence, make up the exclusive hotel belonging to Régis Bulo, president of Relais & Châteaux. With pale-blue shutters and bubblegum-pink geraniums, the hotel is situated at one end of Brantôme, stretching across both sides of a street. At a candlelit table, overlooking the River Dronne, it was a fantasy setting for the highly praised cuisine. Most memorable

was the hotel's speciality scallop soup and my pudding of peaches in an electric-green syrup.

Le Vieux Logis, a 17th-century Carthusian monastery lying south of Périgueux, has the same rustic charm. But situated in the cosier village of Tremolat, it has a smaller feel. The fruit bowl in our room was stocked with apples and pears from the hotel's orchard. Sitting at our open bedroom window, eating freshly-baked bread daubed with confiture, it was easy to appreciate why Henry Miller had once spent a month here.

With a swimming pool in the French-style garden and bikes to tour the rural area, there is plenty one can do to work up an appetite before the delights of evening supper. The visitors' book is testimony to the attraction that Le Vieux Logis holds. One guest cycling through the Dordogne wrote: "We came on our way up, then decided to change our plans, and stayed again on the way back."

Places of interest along the route heading north to the village of Les Eyzies-de-Tayac, where cave dwell-

ers lived during the Ice Age, are easy to find. Nestled in a hillside in the valley of Vézère, is le Gouffre de Proumeyssac. A tour of the "Crystal Cathedral" took us deep into the underground realm, packed with stalagmites and stalactites.

Later we set off for Castel Nouel, in the direction of Brive. On a hill, stretching out over 12 acres, the family-run hotel is a former army barracks. Features for sporty types include tennis, cycling, a heated swimming pool, and an 18-hole golf course. Finding it hard to work up a hunger after our memorable lunch, we dined on salmon and ham, home-smoked salmon, and a heavenly fruit salad. The rooms in the hotel are large and distinctive.

But the sheer shock value of being shown a room at Saint James is hard to beat. Situated in a barn-like, multi-coloured building on a hill just outside the town of Bordeaux from where we started our return train journey home, it is a sanctuary of modern design. The hospital-white bedrooms are temples to minimalism. A LCD player, television and telephone were the only splash of colour in our triangular-shaped room. The blinds and lights operated electronically from the bed, all of which offered a wonderful view over the vines, the Garonne valley, and Bordeaux. Not to forget the rectangular jet-black pool.

Innovative maître-chef Jean-Marie Amari moved his restaurant from Bordeaux to the enchanting village of Bouliac in 1981. Faithful food-lovers, including actress Beatrice Dalle, have since followed. We had the choice of sitting at Le Bistrot or Café de l'Espérance, but plumped for the more formal dining room, which must be fantastic in the winter with its imposing fireplace. With 80 wines to choose from, it was once again left to the sommelier to select a delicious accompaniment to my roast lobster with potatoes and whole garlic cloves. Finishing with cannelles of Bordeaux among the delicate petits fours, it was not so easy this time tucking the end of our gilded adventure.

## Symphony of silence in baroque style

We were about to enter St Nicholas's Church in Mala Strana, Prague's "Little Quarter", when a singer fired a round of staccato across the square. She was upstairs in a long neoclassical building, obviously practising for a concert. "Mozart," said my wife, "Haydn," said I.

Beside the church door was a board advertising the many concerts taking place in Prague that night. My wife, of course, was right: the voice had come from the Liechtenstein Palace, where Mozart was on the bill.

That in itself was no surprise. Prague is full of palaces (there are four in the square alone), as well as glittering baroque churches, and host to countless concerts. But other cities have those, too. What Prague has, uniquely, is silence — the silence that Mozart must have known when, in 1787, he went to St. Nicholas's to play the organ. It was the lack of traffic noise that allowed the soprano to surprise us.

Prague has one of the largest

**Peter Brown catches strains of Mozart as he wends his way through the church-studded, car-free streets of the Czech Republic's capital**

**PRAGUE**

pedestrianised areas in Europe. It starts in the castle area, descends to the Little Quarter, extends over the imposingly romantic 14th-century Charles Bridge, and continues on the other side of the river through the winding lanes of the Old Town.

Here the main attraction is the town hall clock. It was rebuilt in 1490 by a clockmaker called Hanus, said to have been blinded by the burghers in case he re-created his masterpiece elsewhere. It is the kind of urban myth that Kafka, who haunted the square, would have enjoyed.

We joined the crowd in the sunshine as the clock chimed, and we admired

the mechanical apostles as they rotated. We called in at a delicatessen, where the counter assistants were taking pride in their new plastic gloves. One of the attractions of Prague is watching its slow embrace with capitalism.

We were staying in the Hoffmeister, a four-star Relais & Châteaux hotel dedicated to the memory of Adolf Hoffmeister — globetrotter, bon vivant, artist and friend to the famous. Hundreds of his fine-lined portraits and caricatures lend an atmosphere of good humour to the hotel's corridors, dining room and bedrooms. They are also a reminder of Prague's wealth of Art Nouveau sculptures and buildings.

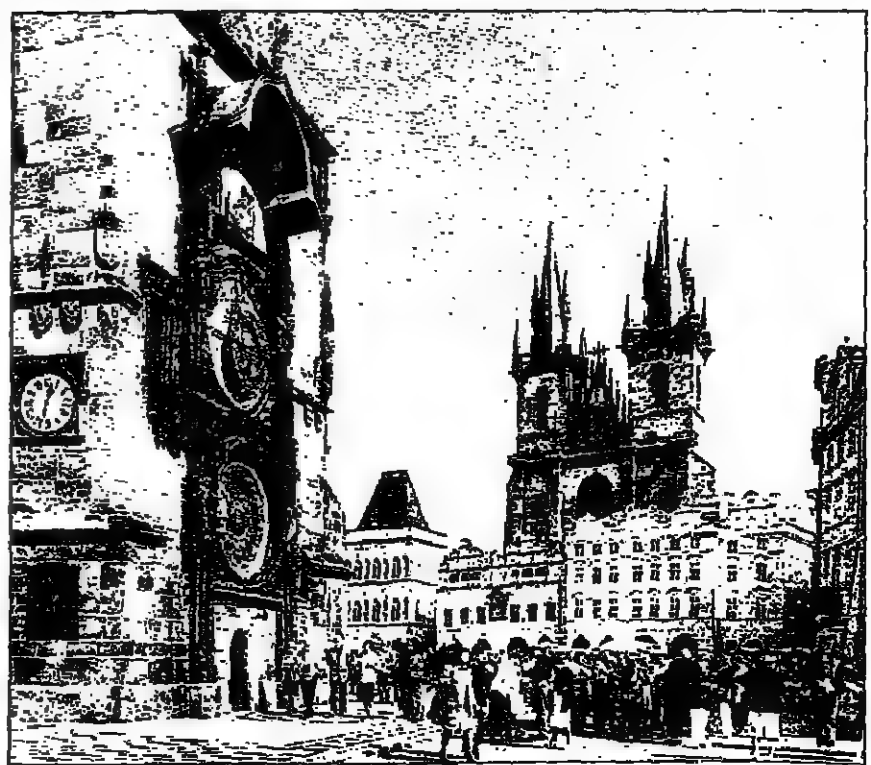
Adolf's son Martin, a film and theatre director, created the hotel and runs it. A genial, bearded figure, his sure hand is

backed by the friendly efficiency of the staff. He talks eloquently about Prague's traditions — puppet theatre, for example — and its history.

Another passion is wine. The Prague Wine Society meets in the hotel every month "and we select the best", he says. A bottle of Moravian wine accompanied an excellent dinner. The violinist, Tibor Gagar, would have graced any concert in Prague.

Next morning, a five-minute walk brought us to the castle complex. Here, surrounding the city, are the castle, a cathedral, five palaces, two towers, a basilica, a monastery and, once again, no cars. You could spend days in this part of Prague alone, enjoying the shrine of St Venceslas and the medieval paintings.

To those of us who grew up with the Iron Curtain, cities such as Prague can still seem remote. To visit them now is to realise what we were missing. Quite simply, Prague puts Europe into context.



Time for sightseeing: the astronomical clock in the main square of Prague



# RELAIS & CHATEAUX



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Leisure Direction specialises in providing a travel service for hotel breaks abroad. It has compiled a range of offers tailored for Times readers. These include money-saving fares for the duration of the Relais & Châteaux offer from September 22 to April 9 next year.

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**Cross the Channel for less than £10? It's true, and there are many other offers to take advantage of whether you are making your journey by road, rail or sea. Follow this guide to cut costs and boost your spending power**

est cost of the journey less than £10 per person. Leisure Direction can arrange a free upgrade to first class on Hoverspeed. It means you are given priority embarkation calls and priority loading and unloading of your car.

Head for Normandy or Brittany on Stena Line's Newhaven-Dieppe Sea Lynx, which takes just over two hours. There, Relais & Châteaux has 11 participating hotels. Or meander further, into the Loire valley, where there are seven.

Close to Calais is the blue-shuttered Château de Montreuil, set within the city walls, in a beautiful garden. For £140 for two, you can enjoy comfort and elegance as well as Christian Germain's perfectly prepared cuisine.

Further down the coast is La Ferme Saint-Simon, a restored farm where you will discover

an exceptional wine list. You can luxuriate in the spa or visit nearby Honfleur. Save more than £70 on the price of a room plus dinner for two.

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For a break of up to five days, you could use the Harwich-Hook of Holland route from £94 per car. In Holland there are four hotels participating in the Passport to Europe promotion, including the Prinses Juliana. A Relais Gourmand establishment, it makes the best of bases for exploring the Roman catacombs at Valkenburg.

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To take a break at some of the participating Relais & Châteaux hotels in Slovenia, the Czech Republic or Norway, Leisure Direction can arrange flights to anywhere in Europe at the most competitive current prices.

In Germany there are 17 Relais & Châteaux to choose from. Fly to Berlin and in a quiet street near Tiergarten park, discover an expertly renovated turn of the century mansion, Hotel Brandenburger Hof. The winter garden is a pretty mix of an Italian abbey courtyard and a Japanese garden where you will enjoy the art exhibits and piano recitals. Two people can stay here and enjoy Euro-Asian cuisine for just £130.

In Italy, there are 15 hotels to tempt you and Leisure Direction can book flights to Rome, Florence or Naples at the lowest fares. In Florence Relais & Châteaux has the Hôtel Regency (right), where you will be delighted with the quiet, light and spacious rooms adorned with antique mirrors. Eat in the Relais le Jardin or the magnificent dining room. The price for your meal and an overnight stay is £187 for two.

Close to Rome, with a flower-bedecked patio, swimming pool and private beach, is Il Pellicano. Relax in comfortable, calm rooms, tucked away between pines and cypresses. The price for dinner, bed and breakfast for two is £194.

Fly to Paris and you are spoilt for choice for Relais & Châteaux hotels as well as restaurants where you can treat yourself to Le Lunch. Leisure Direction can secure you a good deal on Eurostar. For day trippers Leisure Direction will obtain the best return fare, currently £69.

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There are eight splendid restaurants to choose from in Paris, all with two Michelin stars, where Jean-Claude Jambon was voted the world's best sommelier in 1986, will present you with a great collection of French wines and brandies.

At Apicius the atmosphere is simple and charming, and Jean-Pierre Vigato's menu is a celebration of pure flavours. Or indulge yourself at Le Grand Véfour, a beacon of French gastronomy.

All the prices quoted are correct at the time of going to press, but may fluctuate and are subject to restricted space and availability. It is Leisure Direction's business to monitor the best value fares on a daily basis. So, if a new price emerges, you will be notified at the time you make your booking of the best fares available to suit your particular journey.

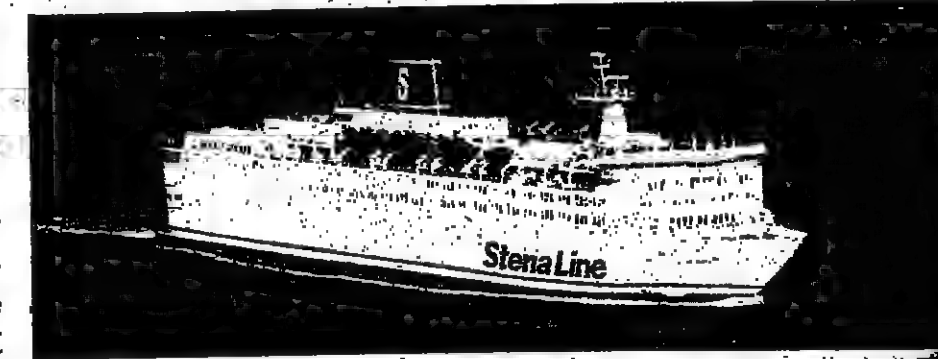
You are not obliged to collect any tokens, or apply for the Passport to Europe card to take advantage of these special travel deals. Leisure Direction has arranged a wide selection of special offers for Times readers with discounts on rail, cross-Channel and air travel. Many more special offer fares are just a phone call away.



Hôtel Regency, Florence: can you imagine a more romantic setting for a bargain break?



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YOUR AT A GLANCE GUIDE ON HOW TO GET THERE

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Up to 5 days, Hovercraft, Over 5 days, Stena Line, 9.30pm and 6.30am, £65	Over 5 days, Stena Line, from £89, Tues-Wed-Thurs
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	London-Paris day return £69
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## Simple steps to pleasure

Readers wishing to take advantage of this offer must have a Times Passport to Europe card and pack.

The pack contains the Relais & Châteaux 1997 International Guide, your Passport to Europe discount card, a concise and detailed listing of the 180 participating hotels, the 175 restaurants offering Le Lunch, a full list of travel offers and all terms and conditions.

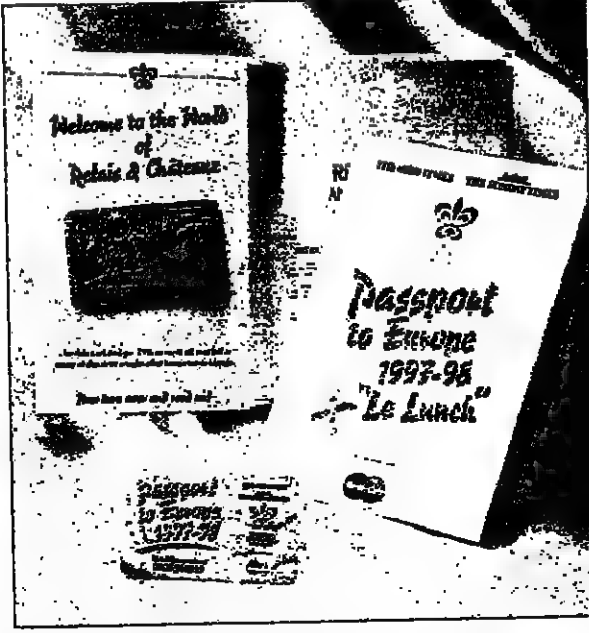
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All travel bookings are subject to availability and restricted to space.



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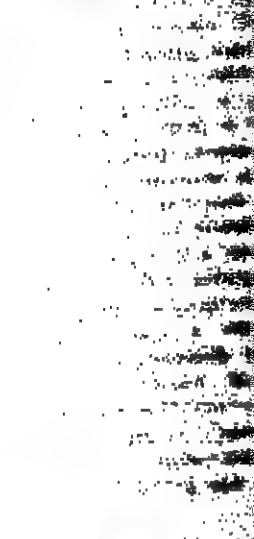
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# The supermodels with straw between the ears

On the Richter scale of the bizarre, Groombridge Place, near Royal Tunbridge Wells, manages a pretty hefty rumble. An outstanding example of Restoration architecture, once the venue for Sir Conan Doyle's seances and latterly the backdrop for Peter Greenaway's film *The Draughtsmans Contract*, it recently played host to a scarecrow festival.

The highlight of the festival was an auction of showbusiness clothes in aid of Save the Children. However, there were no catwalks or popping flashguns here — all the designer rags were spared by a remarkably tantrum-free posse of straw supermodels.

Mick Jagger donated a jacket, Vivienne Westwood a dress, Mike Flowers a cravat, Tania Bryer a green suit, Peter Davison an entire outfit, and Mari Pellow from *West West* gave a crushed red velvet suit that he had worn on *Top of the Pops* and a pair of blue velvet trousers with a ripped seat. Although each was modelled by a ravishing corn dolly, Mr Davison turned out to be the only one brave enough to agree to be photographed beside the prickly, slightly uneasy figures.

"This is the first time I've met a scarecrow face to face," he said, "being a town sort of person."

This kind of bizarre happening does not seem odd in the area around Kent and East Sussex. "Welcome to East Gristead," reads the sign on the A22, underneath which one thoughtful local has scribbled "twinned with the Twilight Zone". As well as being home to some unusual cults (and the Alpine Hotel for Cats), there is Michael Hall School, probably one of the few buildings in the country to have been constructed without a single right angle, and a Tactonic road which became the first to get acupuncture when the key lines beneath it were deemed to be causing too much suffering.

Groombridge Place itself is a haven of the weird and magical, with an astounding collection of strange gardens, including the Hime Garden, the Serpent's Lair with its giant, roof-tile snakes and tiny hand-branch cobwebs, the Valley of the Grooms and the Jolly Mystic Pool, part of the enchanted Forest in which mirrors and glitterballs are

Sartorial scarecrows have been showing off celebrity clothes in aid of a good cause — and with not a tantrum in sight



Mick Jagger donated a jacket and Vivienne Westwood a dress

said to conspire to capture part of each visitor's soul. There are also fields of blazing sunflowers (Fick Your Own), a restored Victorian kitchen garden, a gift shop, a Japanese garden, a vineyard and the wonderful Drunken Garden — named because all the topley around the carp pool appears to be wagging and stumbling.

The sight of a crowd of scarecrows in this setting seems anything but incongruous — even if they include strapping great straw *Chippendale*, a hippy scarecrow, a *Silence Ranger* version (complete with Harvey Nichols bag and a copy of *Country Life*), one made of papier-mâché, another clad in a diving suit and a Freddie

Mercury lookalike. Ivan Hicks is Groombridge's resident land artist and designer of many of the estate's imaginative gardens. Hicks is fascinated with *objets trouvés* and peppers his gardens with tin chests, dressing mirrors, rotary saw blades and deer skulls.

The same technique informed his two contributions to the Scarecrow Festival: Terri Cotta, a lady made from terracotta flowerpots, and a 12ft Rastafarian scarecrow made from sunflowers, a bicycle wheel, fish net, a skylight from a portable luo, two poles and a windbreak.

"I prefer to work like that," says Mr Hicks, "because it actually gives you parameters. With the Rastafarian, I put the big sunflow-

ers in for eyes, and one of them went a bit crooked, and suddenly he just looked stoned. Wonderful.

As for Terri Cotta, she has a strawberry pot for the head, which was a brilliant find because you can see faces in the holes. I was going to give her ivy for hair, but I thought, no, with all these holes she's already four-faced. And, of course, she's an airhead."

Local sculptor Anthony Paul Smitherman, famous for his native American-inspired work, built a 22ft high scarecrow entirely of straw and hessian as the festival's frontpiece. Sadly, it died in a *Wicker Man*-type death before the festivities began. "It was a light-hearted piece, most enjoyable," he says. "But it was also very flammable, and was razed to the ground one night mid-festival, presumably by drunkards."

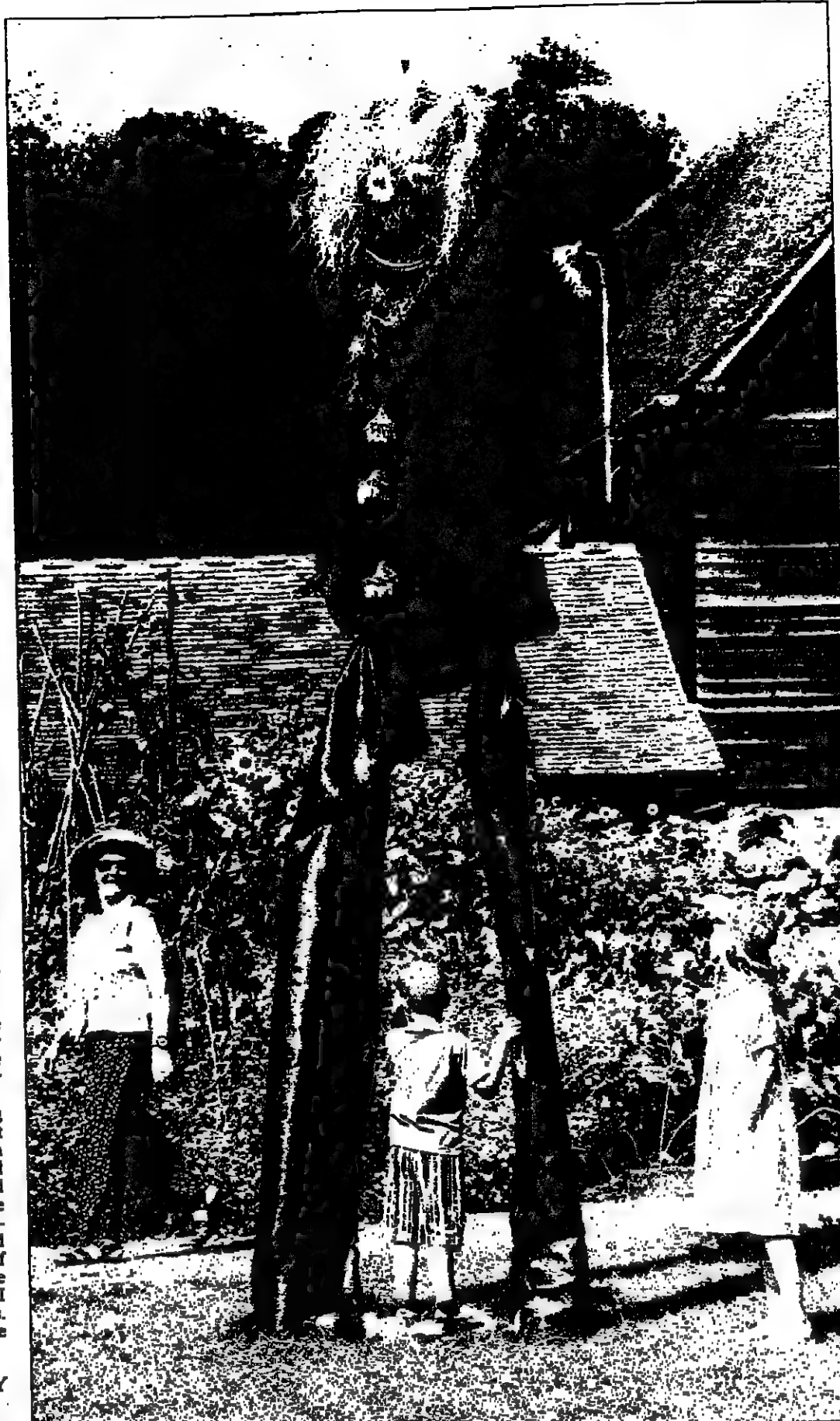
The idea for a Scarecrow Festival came from Emma Piene, Groombridge's events supremo. "I was brought up on a farm," she explains, "and scarecrows are lovely characters in the countryside, so I thought, why not do a festival?"

Raising money for charity also appealed to her, although the amounts raised at the auction were nothing like they imagined: Tania Bryer's suit was sold for £40, a £50 phone bid was taken for Vivienne Westwood's dress and Mike Flowers' cravat went for £25. Mari Pellow's suit and Mick Jagger's jacket raised slightly more: the former went for £70 and the latter for £200 to Mark Powell, who made it in the first place and sold it for £500.

"I didn't expect to buy anything at all," Powell says later. "I'm not even a Rolling Stones fan, I'm a Beatles fan. But Beatles stuff is sold for fortunes, so it's got to be a good investment. I'll just wrap it in tissue and mothballs and put it away unless somebody phones me and offers me an incredible amount of money for it. Then I must be tempted. I only bought it because I thought it was cheap." He grins. "Perhaps I should have left the Mars bar wrapper in the pocket."

JASON HAZELEY

• Groombridge Place gardens, near Tunbridge Wells, Kent (01892 863000) are open daily from 10am till dusk: adults £5, children £3.50



High life: the 12ft Rastafarian scarecrow made from sunflowers, fish net and a windbreak

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"It seems awfully quiet, suddenly. On my hands and knees in the flowerbed, I find myself chatting to the contents of my borders"

## Free at last. Now, where was I?

Linda, our wonder-nanny, is still away — taking a well-earned break from domesticating Alexander, so he has gone off for a further week in the country. I am hoping that all this bucolic exposure will eradicate a few of his more shocking urban-child afflictions — his habit of referring to any large expanse of land as a park, for example; also his deep distrust of animals. Offered a ride on a very small pony with the action and temperament of a wheelchair, he declined with alarm: "Actually, I think it's a bit too dangerous."

I, meanwhile, finding myself suddenly free of all responsibilities, save that of earning a living, have a rare opportunity to revert for a few days to being the nippy girl I once was, before being overtaken by the strange, ruminative, slow-moving world of motherhood. Good gracious, I could take myself off and see a film, or an actual prom played by a real orchestra, instead of the tinned version on Radio 3. I could (I think, rather wildly) go out dancing, having first removed from my handbag the wodge of tissues, packet of Mr Bump plasters, juice-in-box, copy of *Postman Pat's Difficult Day* and scale model of a John Deere tractor

from which I am never normally parted. I suppose I might even consider *Going On A Date*, now that a couple of years have, if not precisely erased, at least to some extent dimmed the shaming memory of the last one.

It was a very grown-up affair, that last date. Great squashy red plush seats at the theatre, and dinner afterwards with two sorts of wine and lots of different knives and forks, and then a lift home in a large car with air conditioning like a rushing mighty wind. What with one thing and another, I had really begun to feel quite like my real self again, and not just the appendage known as Alexander's Mummy. Even the details of the tricky potty-training endgame in which Linda and I were obsessively engaged had as good as faded from my mind.

Until, "Well," said the Date, eventually, rising to leave, "We must do this again very soon." "Ooh, yes, that would be lovely," said I, keenly. And then, in my best child-quelling voice, "Now then, it's

a very long drive home, so I think that, before you get into the motor car, you'd better go and do a wee-wee, don't you?" Oh crikey. Even now it makes me go goose-pimples all over just thinking about it.

On second thoughts, it may be wisest to leave it for another decade or so before making a further attempt at the dating game. I resolve to give the house a really good going over and hold an elegant little dinner party instead. I make a list: "Hoover bags, mackerel, gooseberries, clot crm", and drive up to Blackheath, where I have a long discussion with the fishmonger, for once unpunctuated by cries of "Darling,

### LIFE AND SOUL



JANE SHILLING

can't we go to the toyshop now? This is bliss, I think.

Back home, I drift out into the garden with a glass of wine and water the plants. Then I remember that I did exactly the same thing last night. Probably I have now overwatered them and they will all die. Perhaps I will do some weeding

please don't do that! about the virtues of Heads On versus Heads Off. I wander up and down the high street, looking in the shops, where I find a pretty little amethyst brooch and a copy of Nicholas Mosley's *Life of Ramond Raynes*, which I have been after for ages. No one says Boring Bookshop, Boring Jewellery Shop. Why

instead. It seems awfully quiet, suddenly. On my hands and knees in the flowerbed, I find myself chatting to the contents of my borders. "Hallo," I say, to something small and green. "Are you a little weed or a little flower?"

"First sign of madness," says my next-door-neighbour, Violet ("I'm 34 and all me own teeth"), popping her head over the trellis and then ripping back indoors, cackling and rattling her jewellery, before I can think of anything sensible to say in reply.

Violet is right, of course. With all this unaccustomed time on my hands, I have been having a really good worry about what strikes me as my rapidly advancing senility. I mean, I am barely dabbling my toes in the shallows of middle age, but already the signs of decrepitude have set in.

For a start, I can't hear anything. Meals with my parents are like a scene from Kingsley Amis's *Ending Up*, with

the three of us (they can't hear either) all going "Eh?" "Speak UP!" "Don't gabble" and so on. And Alexander is clearly getting awfully tired of a conversation we seem to have at least once a week, which goes:

Alexander: "..." (Indistinct mumble at my waist level)

Me: (Bending double) "What, darling?"

A: (Indistinctly) "Pardon?"

Me: (Exasperated) "What? Oh DO speak up!"

A: (Loudly) "I said PARDON. Linda says it's very rude to say 'What'."

Then there is the memory loss. Before we went on holiday, I stowed various little objects that I am fond of — the ivory glove-stretchers, the little blue vase with cherubs on it — in a safe hiding place. So safe that, now we are back, I cannot recall where it was. In the vast tracts of silent time that seem to have opened up in the mornings before I go to work, I roam the house distractedly, searching for something. Perhaps it is my blue vase with the cherubs on it. Or perhaps it is simply that, with no one here to boss about, I don't quite know what I am for any more.

JEREMY YOUNG



Scottish dancing is a serious business and newcomers should not make the mistake of thinking of it as a free expression of the soul. Like all tribal mating rituals, dances have complicated steps and nobody will sympathise if you get them wrong.

The midges of Scotland are sharpening their proboscises in readiness for the army of unprotected flesh about to descend on their mountain homelands. As happens every August, the British upper middle classes are packing their Volvo and heading north.

"So by the M40 and the M6 and the A74 they shall go, via the M8 and on to the A9," lolls the non-traditional ballad.

The Scottish house party, so integral in literature, from Trollope and Mitford to the detective stories of Ngaio Marsh (unity of cast, of place, of time, remote location and enough inter-guest irritation/local feuds to make murder a credible outcome) is here. In the coming few weeks the Scots and their guests will pack in the social life of the rest of the country ekes out over an entire year. But these gatherings are as full of pitfalls for the unwary — in custom, dress and differences of language — as a boat trip up the Yangtze river.

Recognisable by their plumage — mainly dun-coloured tweeds — the old Scottish hands who annually migrate are well aware of a fact that should soon be confirmed when the results of the September 11 devolution referendum are published that Scotland is a foreign country and they do things differently there.

One husband described it as "like being married to a Tibetan". If you want to Tibet, you could take an interpreter and guide books to tell you what to wear, what to bring, what to say. Scotland, just because it is joined to England by land, is bereft of these useful publications. So *The Times*, in the way that New Labour has made Focus Groups in vogue, brought together some veterans in a house party for the Glorious Twelfth to remove some of the hazards awaiting the first-time Highlander.

People you consider the essence of urban sophistication will metamorphose on the A9, like Kafka's cockroach, into Scots. There is no point in trying to fight the transformation: resistance is useless and will only end in misery, agreed the Focus Group. You must alter your expectations and embrace the differences. Only then, what could be compared to Basic Training at Sandhurst will be fun.

Metamorphose too. Hurl yourself into freezing lochs, jeering at the Mediterranean tans hyper-ventilating on the heater. "Bring your own Alka-Seltzer."

There's an art to being a guest at a Scottish house party, as a Times Focus Group discovered. Do, say or wear the wrong thing and you may not be invited back. Charlotte Eager, reports

was a piece of advice that every Focus Group member wrote in their questionnaire, "and midge repellent" (this year's top tip is that Clarins makes a combination anti-midge and sunscreen: "lots of cigarettes" (the nearest shop may be tens of miles away and the midges drive to chain-smoking the most dilettante of social smokers; "wads of cash" (you'll need fivers to tip the dailies). As a present, bring good cheese: only orange Scottish Cheddar is available north of the Highland Line. "Always help with the clearing up," added an older Focus Group member with feeling: however grand the house may look, you can guarantee your hostess will spend a lot of time up to her elbows in the washing-up. "Never, ever, park behind your host's Land Rover," said a member with once-flattered car.

Bloody Marys in hand, the Focus

Group went round the room, as though at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, relating their most embarrassing experience. One, mistaking his reclusive host, his new girlfriend's father, for a guest, asked if he was staying too. The relationship didn't last. Another had reversed over the day's bag, reducing to paste the few grouse which had been shot. (It's been a bad year for the grouse ever since anyone can remember.)

I once got food poisoning and spent the whole of the Oban Ball throwing up in the lavatory, but I was too embarrassed to complain to my hostess. As a result, she thought I was drunk and never asked me back.

Never make the mistake, as I once did, of getting a lift in an Argocat (a kind of Action Man accessory which looks like an eight-wheeled

rubber dinghy) without wearing a bra. There is no suspension and moors are very bumpy.

Boss furiously those unfortunes who don't know how to reel, and don't make the mistake of thinking dancing should be a free expression of the soul. Like all tribal mating rituals, Scottish dances have extremely complicated steps and nobody will sympathise if you get them wrong. Revise *The Swinging Sporran* — bible of the reeling classes — in snatched moments in the bath. And always grab the first bath when you get back to the house: the further north, the ropier the hot water supply.

Be warned, some male Focus Groups members find shooting very erotic. Sex and death, they point out, have always been linked.

But the most important tip the Focus Group agreed on was that you need to take an inordinate

number of clothes. Scottish house parties divide into shooting and dancing, both with rigid uniforms. My indispensable luggage fills up the back of a Ford Fiesta. The climate will change from bucketing rain to burning heat and you must be prepared for every eventuality.

The uniform list is as elaborate as for school: the layers of jerseys, like for skiing, you need to peel off should it get hot, should all be dark-coloured, otherwise you'll scare the grouse. You need indoor and outdoor shoes, walking boots, gumboots, trainers and evening shoes (that's one suitcase full already), but not strappy little stilettos, because Scottish dancing requires a lot more than a little sexy swaying your shoes have to combine elegance with the kind of practicality which would allow you to challenge Linford Christie in a 100-yard dash.

Manolo Blahnik, agreed the Focus group, should make shoes for reeling with steel toe caps (protection from kilned stompers) and rubber soles (braking).

The Northern Meeting in Inverness, the Oban and Skye balls, started two centuries ago for local

gentry to find suitable mates, are still going strong. My sister met her husband at the Northern Meeting and consolidated their courtship on Skye. Focus Group women agreed on three vital points. Firstly, make sure your dress stays up; secondly, that it reaches the ground — your hostess will snap strips of sheets round your hem to cover your offending ankles, detracting from the glamour of your frock; thirdly, the man exuding breath-taking sex appeal in his kilt is still the same pimply youth you met at breakfast.

But don't despair if you're already packed only PVC trousers and a mini-dress. The Focus Group, dressed in hand-me-downs, has noticed that British Airways is losing everybody's luggage this year. If hit by a clothing crisis, just tell your hostess your bags have gone astray. You will get endless sympathy and probably invited to borrow her tweeds.

The final tip the Focus Group all agreed on is: if in doubt, ask don't bluff. Even the frostiest dowager will melt if applied to as an expert, and this will help you avoid the worst house-party crime of all: to do something so terrible that you are Never Asked Again.

The camaraderie created by beating the elements have turned the Scottish House Party into one of the best forms of fun.

Ruth Gledhill hears a plea by City businessmen and women for a Nigerian pastor threatened with deportation



TO GIVE spiritual encouragement to those left to keep the City of London markets turning while colleagues disappear to sunspots around the world, a group of leading businessmen has taken over the Tuesday lunchtime ministry of St Helen's Bishopsgate while the rector, Prebendary Dick Lucas, takes a well-earned break.

Beginning the series, which continues for another two weeks, was Mike Farmer, the managing director of the Metal and Commodity Company. But before the service began, a separate group from St Helen's launched a campaign in an attempt to save a former church caretaker from deportation.

The story of Frank Omoriege, his wife Juliet and their two British-born children, aged six and three, was complex and seemingly hope-

## The family who live with fear

less. He and his wife arrived in Britain in early 1989 on visitor visas, at the invitation of Christ Gospel Church in Brixton, south London. A few weeks later, Omoriege's father and brother were murdered in Nigeria, thought to be as a result of Omoriege's outspoken criticism of an allegedly satanic cult. He applied for asylum here. This was rejected and he and his family now live in fear of being detained for deportation at any moment.

After the campaign launch, dozens more young, smart-suited businessmen and women filed into the church for the 40-minute weekday

service. It opened with prayers for Mr Omoriege, who is now a pastor in Brixton.

Mr Farmer did not refer to the family's plight in his address. His topic was "Motivation for serving: why should we care?" He described how difficult it was to keep focused on this month when surrounded by the demands of job security, profit and loss, and other features of City life. "How often in the past year has a meeting or telephone call kept us from being here on Tuesday lunch-times?" he asked.

At this point, my mobile phone went off. It was the newsdesk



Seeking asylum: Frank Omoriege

demanding my return. The Archbishop of Canterbury had just said that if the Prince of Wales remarried the Church would be plunged into crisis. Should I leave or hear Mr Farmer out. I waited for guidance. The Ten Commandments were of little help. Still I waited. Then it came. "Do not let Satan, father of lies, prince of this world, prince of this city, fool you that work, money,

### AT YOUR SERVICE

★ A five-star guide★  
RECTOR: Preb. Dick Lucas  
ARCHITECTURE: Parts date from 13th century. Restored after IRA bombings in 1982 and 1993.  
★★★★★  
LITURGY: Prayers, reading, no hymns. ★  
SPIRITUAL HIGH: Skyscraperish. ★★

job security, this meeting or that telephone call are more important," Mr Farmer said. I resolved to stay, praying that Mr Farmer would pay my mortgage if this cost me my job. But time had run out, the service was over. I sprinted back to Wapping — to find almost the entire newsdesk out to lunch.

● St Helen's Bishopsgate, London EC3A 6AT (0171-283 2231).



WE RECEIVED thousands of entries for *The Times* Cherry Coke Surfing competition (August 2) to win a limited-edition hand-crafted surfboard worth £1,500, made by the master surfboard-craftsman Simon Liddy. The answer to the question "Who were the two male stars of the film *Point Break*?" was Patrick Swayze and Keanu Reeves. And the first correct answer came from David Beggs, of Kimsford, Cheshire. Mr Beggs, all whose family are surfers, will receive his prize next week.





A wander  
in a forest  
frozen  
in time

New Mexico - 20

THE TIMES

# travel

The  
hidden  
face of  
Jerez

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## Even after a good lunch the Duchess never did this

Ride a flying banana, walk underwater or  
simply eat and drink like the Yorks on their  
honeymoon — you can do it all on Mauritius

**T**hey're a funny lot, the Royal Family. When the Duke and Duchess of York stayed in Mauritius during their honeymoon in 1986 they were given sole use of a tiny private island just off the coast. They holed up in their beach villa for a week with the curtains drawn, watching Arnold Schwarzenegger videos, playing a board game called Royal Trivia and ordering steak sandwiches from room service.

The jetskis and sailing boats at their disposal sat askew on the sand and they'll never know what they missed — unless they read this, of course. To be fair, the Duke and Duchess were not put into the care of the formidable Sally Curtis, a kind of Joan Hunter Dunn in overdrive who was determined that none of the island's pleasures should escape us. Not only did we go water skiing and riding, we pulled on an inflatable banana behind a speedboat and go walking on the ocean bed wearing glass helmets, but we still found time to eat and drink like royalty should.

On arriving at the Sugar Beach Resort, cocktails appeared, the band struck up and beautiful Creole dancers waved their skirts about in a kind of Indian Ocean cancan. The Sugar Beach is a picture: pastel-coloured villas set around the main plantation-style house, a pool like the blue lagoon and the sea 20ft from your back door. The villas are on a generous scale, two vast beds, cavernous bathrooms — even the soap was like a little rugby ball. Sarongs and T-shirts are provided free for all guests, a brilliant idea since it means you can hit the beach without unpacking.

Later we repaired to the terrace to eat Creole-style chicken and drink glorious South African wines. The hotel was full but quiet. The few little herbets I had seen were obviously being entertained somewhere discreet.

Hotel managers always want to tell you about their famous guests. The Duke of Edinburgh, it transpired, had stayed next door at La Pirogue, a pretty hotel with thatched chalets. He took his own large wicker hamper filled with bottles of Scotch, gin and brandy. When hotel staff asked his valet why he had done so, the valet said: "In case his plane comes down in the desert." Perhaps he is not such a bad old cove after all. Gary Lineker is also a Mauritius fan, apparently, and so is Paul Gascoigne (but they asked me not to mention that).

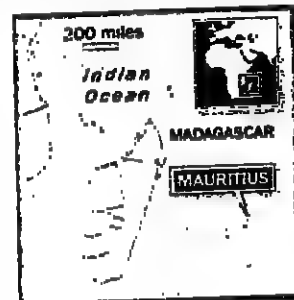
**A**fter lunch Sally frog-marched us off to see the tennis courts (seven), hairdressing salon and massage parlour, the scuba diving centre, the crèche (one small herbett) and the gym (gratifyingly empty). Most Sugar Beach clients seemed content to lie on their sun loungers and flop into the shallow end like well-fed otters when the heat became too much. Good for them, I say. The only signs of real activity were the man with the refrigerated drinks trolley and the Cape sparrows which hopped along in his wake picking up dropped peanuts.

Splendid though it is, it would be a shame for Sugar Beach to seduce you away entirely from the cultural patchwork that is Mauritius. British, French, Creole, Indian and Chinese live here in harmony but they are proba-

bly too full of good food and drink for it to be otherwise.

Mauritius is the size of Surrey and a dot in the Indian Ocean. It is volcanic, but not actively, and the mountains sit rather oddly among flat fields of sugar cane dotted with volcanic boulders. Its highlands are home to spectacular birds and wildlife but not, unfortunately, the indigenous dodo which was hunted to extinction by early settlers.

From a hilltop fortress we looked down on Port Louis, the capital, a scruffy city of concrete blocks interspersed with churches, mosques, ornate temples and the arena where the Pope addressed the faithful when he came here. Twenty per cent of the population lives in Port Louis and they all seemed to be in the market at the same time. This vibrant but malodorous place looked like a tribute to salmonella. There were flies on the fruit and the meat looked terrifying



but the cooks in our group said the spices were good value. We liked the herbalist's stall and its signs — *Hemoroids*, *Aphrodisiac*, *Goutte Militaire*. A man in our party was offered a cure for impotence ("You boil it for 12 minutes," the herbalist said bafflingly). Our man blushed furiously while we hooted with laughter and promised not to tell a soul if he gave us £50 each.

We saw hardly any other tourists in Port Louis. Most seem content to stay in their hotels. The ones we saw were extraordinarily opulent. The Saint Geran was aristocratic, the Coco Beach all quirk and colour like a child's drawing, and in Le Touessrok you could almost smell the banknotes — hardly surprising since a leading member of the Russian mafia was renting the honeymoon suite.

Sally had been trying to persuade us that walking on the ocean bed was an experience not to be missed and after a vast lunch and several bottles of wine we agreed. On the way, someone told a story of pearl fishermen of old who were at the end of airlines on the sea bed when a storm broke out. The crew of the ship cut the lines and left them to a watery death. We all went a bit quiet after that but Sally told him firmly to stop being silly. It is very simple: you put on a weight belt and a glass helmet with a tube leading from it and pad about like

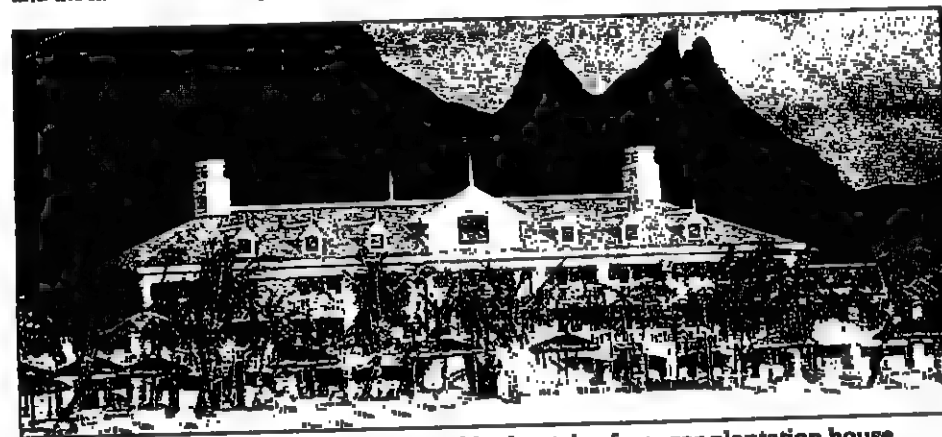
underwater astronauts while fish come along to have a good look at you and nibble bread from your fingers. And all for £20. Marvellous.

That evening we had dinner under the stars at Sugar Beach while a beautiful girl sang a convincing impersonation of Whitney Houston — Mauritians make very good music. Afterwards Sally was still fizzing like a crate of pop and persuaded us to go next door to the casino at La Pirogue where we lost all our money.

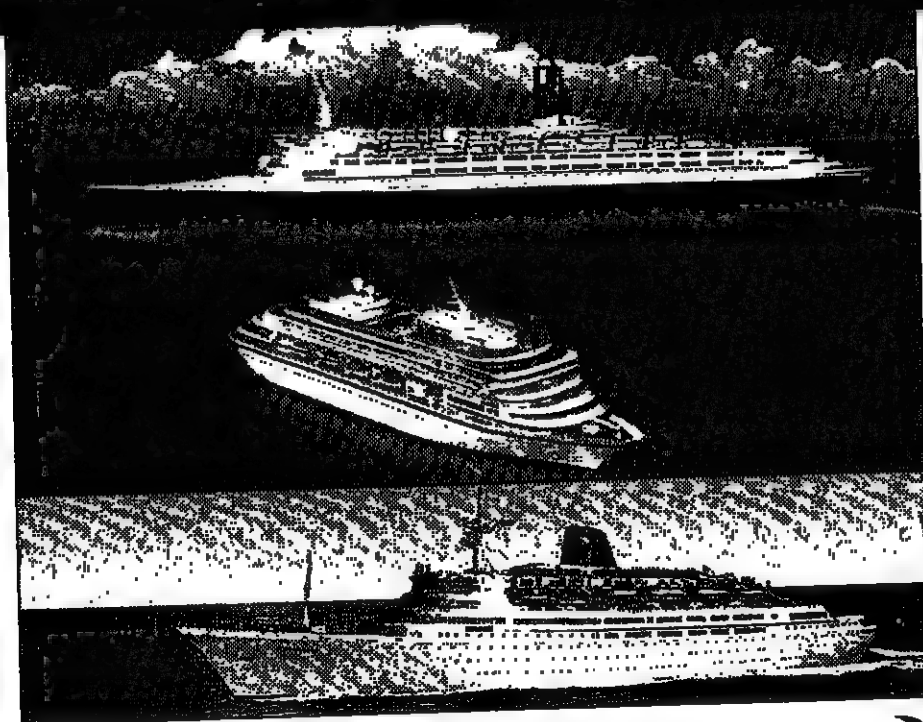
**O**n our last day we had an incredible lunch on the thatched dining terrace at the Saint Geran — heart of palm salad, pan-fried fish and strawberry baskets. Afterwards I thought I might have a little snooze under a palm tree but the one-woman heavave had other ideas. Five of us were ordered to the beach for a trip on the flying banana, a long inflatable thing with six seats on top, attached to a speedboat. It was great fun, although what the sunbathers thought of this motley crew does not bear thinking about.

Before we could get our breath back we found ourselves at the Coco Beach riding school, hats squashed on our heads, legs being put into boots like children being dressed for school and horses trotted out according to our capabilities. They took one look at my Thelwell technique and switched me to a nice little dabbler. My chums got enormous great beasts and did not bat an eyelid. They cantered off into the surf at full tilt while I lolloped along in their wake like a bag of laundry, thinking that perhaps the Duchess of York had had the right idea after all.

MARY GOLD



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STUL 34

Troupes of Creole dancers and cocktails greet tourists at Sugar Beach resort

### FACT FILE

- Air Mauritius (0171-434 4375) offers flights from Heathrow or Manchester to Mauritius from £635.
- Sunset Travel (0171-498 9922) offers seven nights half board at Sugar Beach with flights from £1,200 per person. Kuoni (01306 743000) has a similar package from £1,348.
- The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends *Culture Shock! Mauritius*, by Roseine NgCheong-Lum (Kuperard, £7.95). *Bradt Guide, Mauritius* (£11.95).
- Orders for the Royal Trivia board game can be placed on 0831 346258.







Norfolk: While Walsingham welcomes thousands of worshippers, other towns snooze in idyllic anonymity

## Pilgrims celebrate rebirth of the shrines



One of the pilgrims, with a prayer/hymn card and rosary, who this week walked barefoot along the holy mile from the Slipper Chapel to Walsingham Abbey to celebrate the refounding of the shrine

On Wednesday, in a small Norfolk village, Cardinal Cahal Daly, the Roman Catholic Primate of All Ireland, will launch a year of celebrations to commemorate an event that took place 100 years ago this week: the first modern pilgrimage to Walsingham, when 50 Catholic pilgrims arrived on the 12.08 train from King's Lynn. They may not have known it at the time, but those pilgrims were the start of something big. A century on, Walsingham is again a centre of pilgrimage, with Anglican and Catholic shrines attracting half a million visitors a year.

It all began in 1061, when the lady of the manor, Richeldis de Faverches, had a vision of Our Lady in which she was led to Nazareth to see the "Holy House", where the Angel Gabriel had appeared. Mary commanded Richeldis to build a replica in Walsingham, and the simple wooden house, soon became a place of pilgrimage.

Augustinian and Franciscan monasteries grew up around the site; their remains can still be seen.

By the Middle Ages Walsingham had become the most important Marian shrine in Christendom.

Henry III made the pilgrimage at least 11 times and gave an annual offering of 40 shillings to the monks. Monarchs up to and including Henry VIII would arrive on horseback, leave their shoes at the 14th-century Slipper Chapel, and walk the final "holy mile" into Walsingham Abbey.

It was Henry VIII, however, who was responsible for Walsingham's decline, when he dissolved the monasteries and had the sub-prior of the abbey, Richard, beheaded. Henry's son, Edward VI, was responsible for Walsingham's decline, when he dissolved the monasteries and had the sub-prior of the abbey, Richard, beheaded. Henry's son, Edward VI, was responsible for Walsingham's decline, when he dissolved the monasteries and had the sub-prior of the abbey, Richard, beheaded.

More than 300 years after the Reformation, the idea of pilgrimage was reborn and the first organised group arrived on August 20, 1897. Each of the original pilgrims was granted an Indulgence of 40 days by the Bishop of Northampton. Others quickly followed. By the 1930s the restored Slipper Chapel

had become the national Catholic shrine, and Anglicans — inspired by the Catholic revival of the Oxford Movement — had joined in with a shrine of their own. The Holy House was recreated, this time in brick and stone, and a church built to house it, close to the ruined priory.

When I visited recently I began, as all pilgrims should, with a visit to the Slipper Chapel, then, keeping my shoes firmly on, I continued into Walsingham by car. The houses along the high street are built in a mixture of timber, brick and flint in an architectural medley from medieval to Georgian, and typical of this part of north Norfolk. The shops sell rosaries and candles. In



Pilgrims carry a statue of the Virgin and Child

the old railway station above the village is a Russian Orthodox chapel, with icons painted by the resident priests.

Slowly I made my way to the Anglican shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. Inside the door of the

church, banks of wooden prayer boards gave thanks to Mary — "for healing from smoking", "for success in exams", "for obtaining a job".

This was the sort of Protestantism that would give Ian Paisley a fit. There were miracles attributed to holy water from the church: there were prayers for newborn children (I noticed one for a girl named Richeldis) and a sad RIP for a mother and daughter, who had both died young a few years apart. At the

heart of the church, the dark brick of the Holy House was illuminated by dozens of candles: each one signifying a prayer. Prayers are said here at six o'clock each evening for all who have visited or sent requests. Standing alone in the

candlelight before the image of the Virgin it is difficult to be unmoved, whatever your faith.

A few minutes away, in another church, is a miracle of a different kind. The parish church of St Mary and All the Saints was almost totally destroyed by a fire in 1961. But the interior of the 14th-century shell has been rebuilt with brilliantly whitewashed walls and new "Gothic" arches. The effect is magnificent, but was spoilt for me by the stern notices warning visitors of hidden security cameras and the propaganda against women priests displayed around the church. I walked off my anger in the Abbey Gardens straddling the River Nene beside the site of Richeldis's original shrine.

The pilgrim season at Walsingham runs from Easter to November; there is scarcely a day in summer when the village is not crowded with coach parties.

The centenary year will see more visitors than ever, as the Catholic Pilgrim Bureau lays on a year-long festival of music and drama, begin-

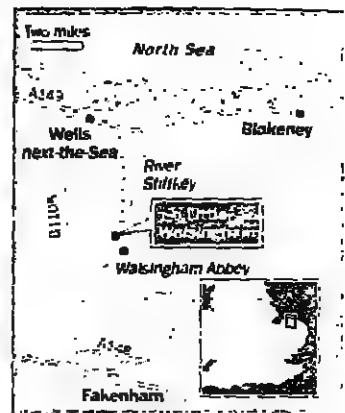
ning on September 12 with a concert of Marian music and ending a year later with a performance by the Westminster Cathedral Choir.

The Anglican national pilgrimage takes place over the 1998 Spring Bank Holiday on May 25. But, though the different churches organise their own events, Walsingham is an ecumenical place, where every pilgrimage features people of all faiths, and none.

My favourite time to visit Walsingham is in winter, when the pilgrims have departed, the souvenir shops are closed and the chapels become places of solitude. As winter turns to spring, the Abbey Gardens are carpeted with snowdrops and this celebration of new life, appearing like magic on the site of Richeldis's shrine, adds an extra dimension to the visit.

Go this week to share in the centenary celebrations; but if you really want to appreciate Walsingham, go back alone in the winter months and let it speak to you in the silence.

TONY KELLY



### FACT FILE

■ Getting there: Walsingham is on the B1105 between Fakenham and Wells-next-the-Sea. From Easter to September a narrow-gauge railway runs several times a day between Walsingham and Wells (information on 01328 854504).

■ Accommodation: The Old Bakehouse, High Street (01328 820454); double B&B, £37-£43. The Black Lion, Friday Market (01328 820235); double B&B, £40-£50. Pilgrim accommodation is available through the Catholic Pilgrim Bureau (01328 820317) and the Anglican Shrine Office (01328 820255).

■ Where to eat: The Old Bakehouse (see above); dinner only, about £25. Swallows Restaurant, 15 High Street (01328 820555), offers home-made lunches from £3.95.

■ Guided walks: These take place every Wednesday and Thursday until the end of September, leaving from the Shirehall Museum on Common Place at 11am and lasting about two hours. £3.75, children aged eight-16 £2. Information on 01328 820250.

■ Centenary events: The centenary begins on August 20 with Mass at the Slipper Chapel at 12 noon, a procession to the Abbey Gardens and an evening party at the Catholic shrine. The festival of music and drama begins on September 12. Centenary programme available from the Catholic Pilgrim Bureau (01328 820217).

■ Tourist Information Centre: Shirehall Museum, Common Place (01328 820510).

## Places you shouldn't know about

Very flat? Norfolk? Well, that was how Noël Coward famously rubbished the county, and all who honeymoon in her, in *Private Lives* — and the Master's glib gibe has become enshrined in British folklore and regarded

as a fair summary of an entire region. But you know what? Nobody who knows and loves England's serene easterly bow will mind the taunt one little bit. If metropolitan sophisticates want to plunk their chintzy second homes in

the Cotswolds, and leave Norfolk's meandering lanes, the horizon-filling plains of wheat and lavender, the pebble-walled villages and the lazy rivers in the sort of tranquillity that was last disturbed by marauding Domes in the early 11th century, that's fine with us. And if holidaymakers seeking a slice of Britain's coast persist in heading for crowded Devon or drizzly North Wales, that's OK, too. Norfolk's jolly little ports, its clean and sandy beaches, its lovingly restored

Victorian piers and saltily authentic jellied-egg stalls, its haunting sea marshes and fabulous array of majestic medieval churches — all this can remain the secret of initiates who are perfectly content to let the world go on believing that Norfolk is flat, dull and devoid of all distinguishing features.

Of course, parts of Norfolk are distressingly well known to the world at large. The Broads, on a summer Sunday afternoon when the abrasive whine of the ubiquitous cabin cruiser and the churning wash of the pleasure steamer seem to disturb even the most remote backwater, have all the soothing calm of the M25 in the rush hour. Similarly, all roads leading to Sandringham are customarily clogged with royal groupies. And Norwich, for all its architectural splendours, bustling marketplace and teeming pub life, is a beautiful city terminally in thrall to the motorcar. But these are mere pockets of

irritation in a county that is otherwise blissfully free of urban stress and strain. Thanks, no doubt, to its comparative remoteness from large conurbations (central London is a good three-hour drive from most of the county), Norfolk has largely been left cocooned in an overwhelmingly agricultural way of life.

Its landscape has thus been spared both the commuter-town sprawl and the second-home blight, the creeping sicknesses of the late 20th century that have all but devoured vast swathes of formerly rural Sussex, Gloucestershire, Hampshire and neighbouring Suffolk. Most important of all, it can boast 40 or 50 towns or villages that each has a distinctive character, unlike anywhere else and unlike each other. It is this jaunty and surprising variety that is such a perennial tonic to the jaded spirit.

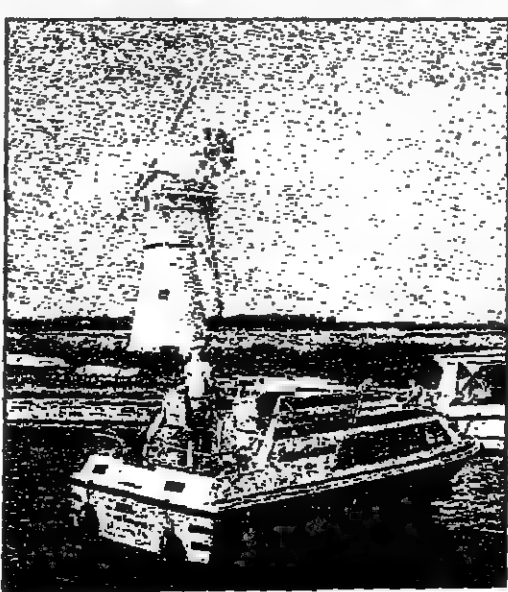
If I want Georgian elegance and a damn good dinner, I go to Holt, with its high street of splendidly old-fashioned little shops. For bracing walks across the most richly endowed birdwatchers' paradise in Britain, head for Blakeney, or for the great shingle bank at Cley — seven miles long, with seals watching your progress from 20 yards off shore.

For picture-postcard charm, the secret hamlet of Heydon is the place. For stately halls and vast, rolling estates, explore Mannington, Holkham or Blickling. For beautifully carved furniture, any one of a dozen superb craftsmen in the Southwold and Aylsham area. For eccentricity, look in at the Fakenham Museum of Gas History, or the extraordinary Thurstford Steam Engine Collection.

I could fill this entire newspaper with examples of Norfolk's quieter charms, but self-interest dictates that I fall silent. The last thing that Norfolk-lovers want is to encourage thousands of day trippers to pour in each weekend. Norfolk is a place whose glories only reveal themselves gradually, mysteriously, elusively. But once you are hooked, it never lets you go. The rural spirit of England is alive and well here.

And, by the way, Mr Coward, it is not flat. Some of my favourite hills and dales nestle deep in the heart of Norfolk. But I'm damned if I'm telling anybody where they are.

RICHARD MORRISON



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Spain: The lovelorn Christopher Columbus left his heart in the tiny island of Gomera, so they say ...

## Need a snifter? Just give a little whistle

The first sight of Gomera was of a tiny black island the shape of an upturned saucer but as we got nearer it emerged as a surprisingly green and hilly place.

Gomera, one of the smallest and least known of the Canary Islands, an hour west by ferry from the port of Los Cristianos on its big sister island of Tenerife, is about the size of the Isle of Wight but the comparison ends there. Wight's highest hill pokes up a couple of hundred feet. Gomera's main peak soars nearly 4,000ft. It has vast valleys, rich with vegetation like a Caribbean island, great outcrops of bare rock that remind you of Arizona, and one of Europe's last areas of laurel woodland. A place of breathtaking beauty.

Various circumstances have, so far, stopped Gomera from being developed for mass tourism. Its handful of beaches are small and covered with black sand. A shortage of fresh water and local planning rules have curtailed new building. There are few big hotels and even fewer with their own swimming pool. For about 30 years German tourists have been coming to Valle Gran Rey on the west coast but over-development now makes it a place to avoid.

Before heading into the valleys, the charming little capital of San Sebastian is worth exploring. It is a town with a bustling main square and plenty of bars and restaurants. But its main claim to fame is as a favourite stopping-off place of Christopher Columbus, who had a house here, Casa de Colon, which is now a small museum, and worshipped at the beautifully preserved church of Nuestra de la Asuncion.

Columbus also enjoyed many dalliances with local women, including a heart-breaking one with the widow Beatriz de Bobadilla, who eventually married the local governor. A miffed Columbus, it is said, exacted his revenge on Europe by discovering America.

Gomera is small enough to walk around in a week, and a good starting point is the visitor's centre in the hills above the village of Agulo on the northeast coast. The centre gives a good feel for the island. Its gardens contain more indigenous species than in Britain and Germany put together.

From the centre it takes about an hour or so to walk past giant aloe and prickly pear cacti to the head of the valley, which overlooks the town of Vallehermoso. This is a spectacular view which improves



the further you head into the valley. My first impression was the sheer lushness of the valley but soon each direction provided different views.

Behind was green woodland of the Garajonay National Park, the only one on the island. Around the isolated hamlet of El Tio were the typical, well-kept farmland terraces usually planted with bananas or orange trees.

The way down to Vallehermoso was by a steep, twisting track followed by a long, gentle walk past palm trees and more terraces into the town.

It is in the town that the Gomeran art of whistling — *sibol* — is being revived. Legend has it that the original inhabitants, the Guanches, had their tongues cut out by the Conquistadores and so developed a whistling language, using their fingers to produce different sounds, to communicate. The language was taken up by farmers and shepherds to send messages across valleys for up to two miles. Now the *Silbadores* demonstrate



San Sebastian, the island's capital

their skills by sending complicated messages, such as "fetch a gin and tonic for the lady in the blue dress", to impressed tourists.

From Vallehermoso there is a long but rewarding walk to the village of Las Rosas, which takes in much of the best of the island. The walk takes you past the large Encantadora reservoir and the delightful villages of Banda de Las Rosas and Los Loros, blooming with summer flowers, and up into some high meadows.

From here, a long, hard ascent to the national park is crowned by one of the most stunning views on the island. From about 4,000ft you can look down the V-shaped valley beyond Vallehermoso to the sea. Each side of the valley is green with vegetation. You have to remember you are on a small European island and not in the verdant Caribbean.

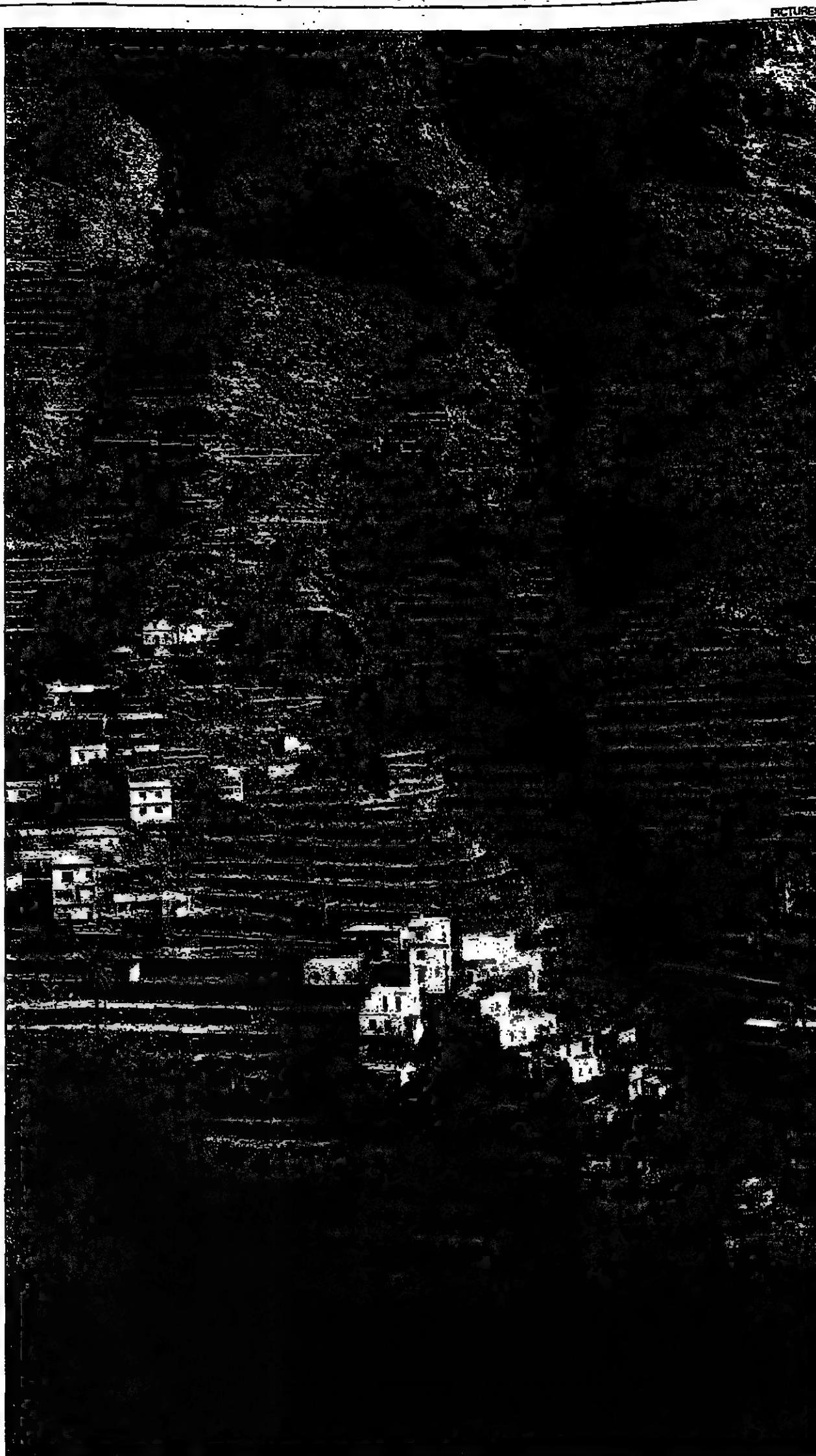
The eight-day holiday itinerary I took provides for a rest day but this is a chance to take a walk through the laurel woods of the national park. This type of woodland once covered much of Europe but was destroyed in the Ice Age. The few acres left on Gomera are among the largest areas remaining in Europe.

However, it is the last day that provides the most enjoyable walk. From the lively fishing resort of Santiago, you can take a taxi to the peaceful village of Pastrana, where the road ends. You can then enjoy a walk up the Santiago Valley without seeing another person all day. The track runs along the valley with the island's biggest bare rock, the 3,500ft Roque Agando, looming before you.

Too soon the walk is over and you are back on the Tarmac, faced with a choice: you can carry on trekking to San Sebastian or "cheat" by walking two miles along the road to the nearest bar and ordering a taxi.

The Bar Peraza is perched on the edge of a ravine with intoxicating views down the valley. As you sip your cold beer, it is worth remembering the story of the man after whom the bar is named. Señor Peraza was sent by the Spanish to govern the island but infuriated locals by continually seducing their maidens. After an affair with one particularly young victim, the Gomerans decided enough was enough and threw Peraza over the ravine to his death. But, as the locals say, he would have enjoyed some stunning views on the way down.

STANLEY SLAUGHTER



Pretty houses climb the terraced hillsides of Valle Gran Rey, but elsewhere in the village there is tourist over-development

### GOMERA

■ The author travelled with Sherpa Expeditions (0881-577 2717), which offers an eight-day tour from £741 (£801 with escort), including flights, B&B (with the last night in the five-star national park in San Sebastian) and most evening meals and lunches. The price does not include taxi fares or the ferry or hydrofoil service, about £6, from Los Cristianos on Tenerife to San Sebastian. For unescorted tours, visitors are provided with a map of Gomera and detailed directions.

■ Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends *Alternative Gomera*, by Nicholas Albery (Institute for Social Inventions, £6.50), *Landscapes of South Tenerife and La Gomera* by Noel Rochford (Sunflower Books £9.99).

■ Spanish Tourist Office in London, 0171-499 0901.

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### Answers from page 23

SLUB  
(b) A yarn containing thickened parts, or slubs, at intervals. A fabric woven from such a yarn. Also, attributively, having an irregular effect given by a warp of uneven thickness.

TORRY  
(a) To provoke and fight (a bull). From the Spanish *torrear*, to fight (a bull), to be a bullfighter. Roy Campbell, *Mithras Emblems*, 1936. "The white Torero — him who took the toss / Sky-high upon the black horns of the Cross, / For torrying the horned prince of Death."

URSCHLEIM  
(b) In early biology, the original form of life, protoplasm. From the German *Ursprung* (in the Chaldeans, a symbol of great antiquity) and *slime*.

SNOEK  
(c) The snake mackerel, *Thyrates arua*, of the family *Gempylidae*, a large marine food fish found in large shoals in colder parts of Southern Hemisphere oceans.

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... and Leslie Thomas discovers the romance of a green silence on the Route del Toro in Andalusia

# The magic of horses, bulls and sherry



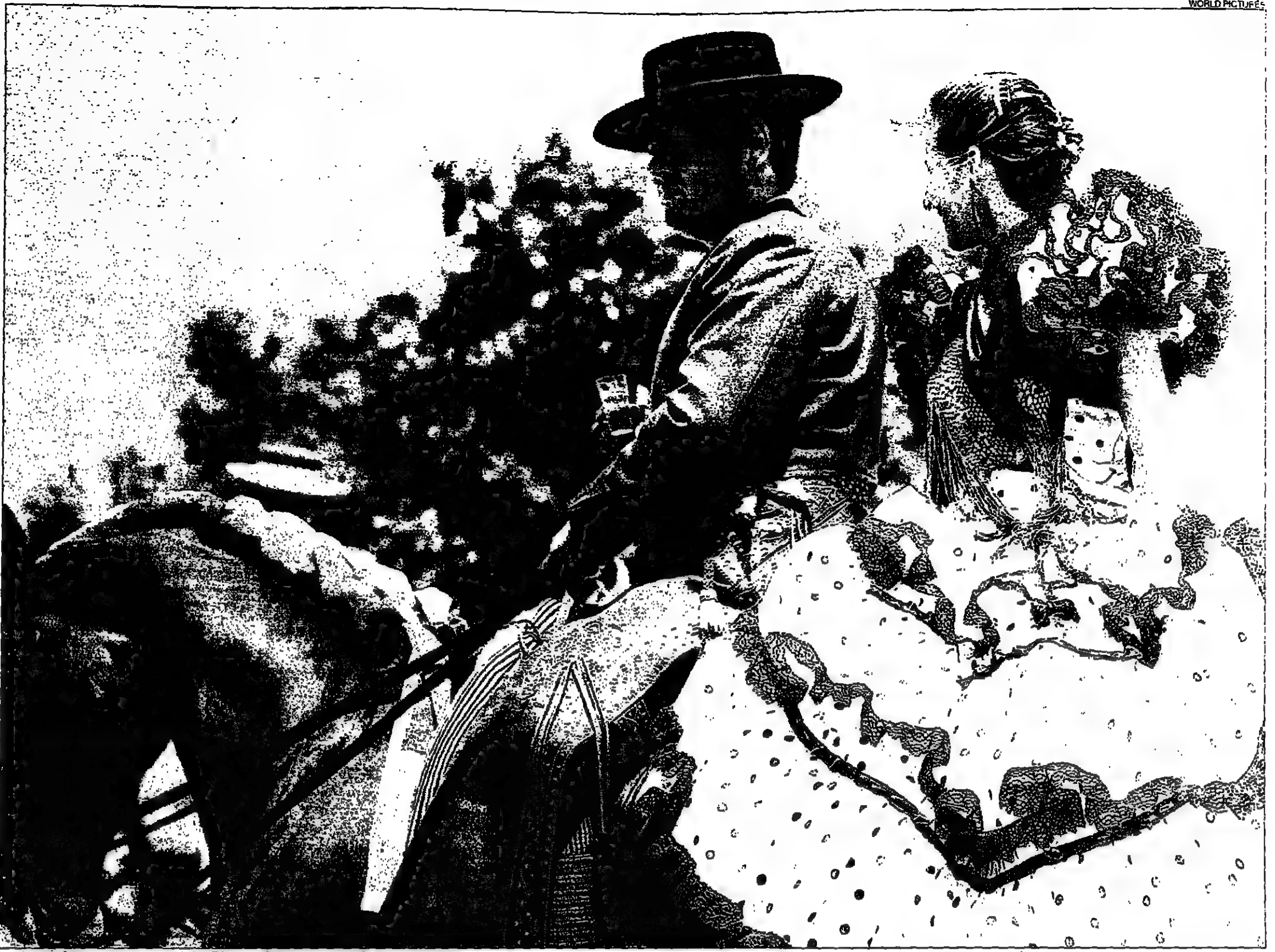
The rain in Spain falls mainly on the small red-roofed town of Grazalema. Built into a crevice between the Sierra Marguaria and the Sierra Urbique in Andalusia, it receives an average 2,200 litres of rain per square metre in a year (in 1963 it had 4,355 litres) but despite this, probably because of it, visitors still search it out. They go for the tranquillity of the mountains, to walk, to climb, to fish, and to enjoy the rain.

We reached Grazalema almost at the end of an oval journey through Andalusia. Sometimes it rained, but there was sunshine too. There were springtime eagles in the hills. Along the coast it was stormy and the road to Cadiz was as crammed and contrary as ever, the trucks and machinery working to complete the dual carriageway to Valderama in time for golf's Ryder Cup next month, sending up clouds of red dust, even through the thickening drizzle. Gibraltar from the back is by no means as imposing as its frontal elevation — like a cloaked figure slinking away from the weather.

But, short of Algeciras, my wife Diana pointed out a sign: *Jerez de la Frontera*. Gladly I turned off and within a mile we were in another land. The road rolled west through easy hills, the traffic had suddenly vanished and I was driving through a green silence. Fields so lush that you might have been in Ireland, rivers and lakes, outcrops of carved rock, and an occasional white house as a milestone.

The Spanish call this the *Route del Toro*, and in the meadows beside the road lounged the long-haired bulls of the region, red and moody, rounded up by leather-skinned men on horseback — just like cowboys except that they wore flat caps. There were fields of horses, too, standing casually and elegantly below trees out of the growing sun.

For more than 120 kilometres the road goes through little but countryside; villagers are concealed in the



At the Jerez horse fair, the locals turn out — grapes of sherry in hand — for one of Andalusia's most spectacular events. In the fields, men on horseback — just like cowboys except that they wear flat caps — tend the bulls

hills, houses stand aloof and there is the occasional church, perched like an overcoat on a rock. After a winter of rain, the rivers and lakes were full.

The first landfall, as it were, was the outskirts of Jerez de la Frontera. It looked as though the promise was not to be

fulfilled — gritty industrial streets, a railway, petrol stations and dusty trees. But there was no need to worry. Soon we found ourselves in a place of squares and fountains, old stucco houses and iron balconies carved and curved. There were storks on the tall chimneys of the Sanderman sherry premises.

Jerez is sherry. Half a dozen famous names spilled out on the old walls of the city tell an old — and very English — story: Domoque, a family so numerous that it would take a book to list the names, Byass, Gonzales, Harvey, Sanderman. The amber palomino grape, grown in the surrounding chalk country, treated and coaxed in oaken cases, provides the unique taste, the sunny colour. The town is full of cellars piled with old and rather gloomy barrels, every corner has its bodega where they will gladly pour you a clear fino, an oloroso, or a rich amontillado.

The city was bigger than we had expected, crossed with

cobbled streets overhung with windows and tight with shadows. We could not find the hotel until a housewife cheerily offered to direct us if we would take her and her shopping home. We gladly agreed.

She insisted, like most of the inhabitants, that the city be called by its full name, Jerez de la Frontera. There are other places in the region with the same appellation. The frontier in question is not that with Portugal, still beyond the province of Huelva, but the historic front line where in the 8th century the Spanish held the invading Moors (for a while).

In the evening it rained and we were caught between the tables and the casks of a bodega with animated Spanish families, including an array of babies. Three glasses of fino and I thought it was time to find a restaurant. They called a taxi and everyone cheered us on our way. The driver took us to a place run by his brother. It was a local sort of cafe with a bar and a few tables, one of which was

occupied by children in football kit but watching a bullfight on television. We had Andalusian soup, which is mostly floating beans, and some excellent baked ham. The brother's taxi turned up on cue to take us to the hotel.

Jerez is also for its flamenco and for splendid horses. There is a monument to the horse in the Plaza del Caballo and there is the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art. On Thursdays it has a performance, but any other day you can go into the magnificent round-windowed hippodrome to see the horses and riders rehearsing. Spanish rousie fills the fine interior. The splendid greys went through their ballet, their syncope trotting, while we sat with a school of delighted infants who arrived roped together so no one was lost.

In the afternoon we set out on the return journey, re-entering the hills, casual at first but beyond Arcos becoming taller and closer. The land was flower-patterned pasture and trees hanging thickly over rivers. Swallows darted among olive groves, there were a few silent houses and the road remained all but empty.

Behind the dappled foreground more serious mountains rose like a stone wall. Soon we were among them, the road coiling upwards until we reached Grazalema. On cue it began to rain.

The town has been likened to a colony of merlins' nests clinging to the cliffs, but it is well-ordered for all that. The bending streets are narrow and neat, the gardens obviously well-nourished, and flowers drip from iron balustrades and balconies. Red tiles weave up and down with the levels of the streets. Two church towers stand out firmly.

We did not see a soul until we were on the rising road on our way out. Then there were six women in three separate sets of two, as though they had been talking and had just parted. They wore heavy black skirts with shawls on their heads and shoulders. One was much younger than the others, only in her twenties, although her clothes were the same.

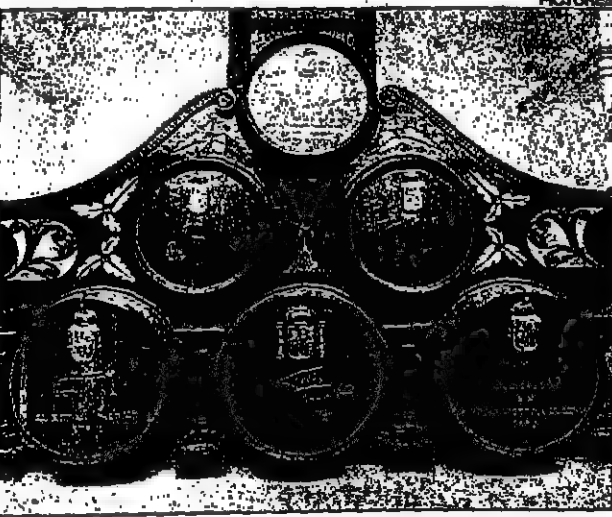
I stopped the car and asked them the way to Ronda. There is only one road but I thought I might engage them in conversation. The younger one pointed over the mountain and then they continued on their separate ways, doubtless wondering about a driver who did not have the wit to see the road in front of his nose.

## GRAZALEMA FACT FILE

- The author flew with Palmair (01202 299299) from Bournemouth to Malaga, £149 return. Sunday flights until October 19, then Saturday through the winter. Prices range from £99-£209.
- Car hire: Hertz (0990 996699) has a week's car hire from Malaga from £132.
- Accommodation: The Hotel Guadalete in Jerez (00 34 556 182285) has double rooms from £60 a night.
- Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends: *Spanish Journeys*, by Adam Hopkins (Penguin, £8.99). *Between Hopes & Memories*, by Michael Jacobs (Picador, £8.99). *Lazy Days in Andalusia* (Cadogan, £5.99). *Andalusia* (Rough Guide, £9.99).



Grazalema: well-ordered



The sign that says you're in Jerez, the sherry town

St Petersburg, without doubt the most beautiful of all Russian cities, is an ideal city for a weekend visit. Although most prospective travellers would normally contemplate a visit during the summer months, we believe that St Petersburg is even more attractive during the winter. Cold it may be, but who could ever forget seeing the magical aristocratic palaces under a mantle of freshly fallen snow. Added to this, the city is relatively free of tourists, leaving such gems as the Hermitage Museum and the country estates which surround St Petersburg free of the high season crowds.

During the winter months the cultural life of St Petersburg is at its peak. Music and dance will be at their best, whether your interest lies in ballet or opera. The Kirov company will offer something to entice you. It is also an excellent time for concerts and theatre and during the course of your visit there will be much on offer.

## THE PETERHOF - A FOUR STAR HOTELSHIP

With your time in St Petersburg limited, it is essential to stay in a central area. With this in mind we have selected the Peterhof, a permanently moored hotelship on the River Neva. The Swiss managed vessel is moored in an ideal position and offers excellent facilities.

The Peterhof has been selected in preference to other hotels as currently the choice is somewhat limited. True there are some splendid deluxe hotels in the city, but these are essentially catering for the expensive businessman. The daily rates are very high, as are the costs of meals and other hotel services. The alternative is to stay in one of the former sea-rim hotels which do not suit everyone and are best suited to travellers on a limited budget.

The Peterhof is a most agreeable alternative

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## THE ITINERARY

Day 1 London (Gatwick) St Petersburg. Mid-morning departure with British Airways (Flying time is 4 hours). Arrive in the afternoon and drive to the Peterhof for a 3 night stay.

Day 2 St Petersburg. Morning city tour. Afternoon free.

Day 3 St Petersburg. There are many optional city excursions available including the Hermitage Museum, as well as trips out to the country estates. Prices range from £10 to £25 and are bookable on board. It is also possible

to book tickets on board for concerts, opera, ballet and circus (subject to availability).

Day 4 St Petersburg to London (Gatwick). Day free for individual exploration or further optional excursions until late afternoon.

Flight to London. Arrive early morning.

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5, 12, 19 December 1997  
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DEPARTURES FROM OTHER UK AIRPORTS  
Flights are also available from Manchester and Glasgow airports with Scandinavian Airlines flying via Copenhagen or Stockholm at the following supplements: Manchester £25 per person, Glasgow £65 per person.

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# AROUND THE WORLD: A WEEKEND GUIDE

## Return to the Somme

THE first tank ever to go into action moved out of Glanchy in France at 5.15am on September 15, 1916, to attack a German stronghold. The defenders fled and the stalemate of trench warfare in the First World War was eventually broken.

Holts Tours (01304 612248), the battlefield specialist, is organising a four-day itinerary in September. It starts at the Bovington Tank Museum in Dorset, before crossing the Channel to visit the battlefields of the Somme and Cambrai, and Villers Bretonneux, the scene of the first tank battle. The tour costs £399, including fares, coach travel, half-board accommodation and entrance fees.

## Family farm

AUTUMN budget breaks across the Channel may help to delay those post-summer blues. InnTravel (01633 62881), which offers a tempting variety of trips, has recently discovered a family-run *ferme-auberge* dating from the 13th century at Mareville, in the Valley of the Course. This is one of the more picturesque and peaceful, yet lesser-known, areas of Picardy. Country cooking from farm-fresh produce is the speciality. The two-night break costs from £85 for half-board and ferry crossing.

Further west, Brittany Ferries (0171-771 7008 or 0990 360360) which took over the Gites de France organisation last November, offers Cite d'Interlude self-catering short breaks in country cottages in Brittany, Normandy and the Loire Valley between October and May. The prices, based on a minimum stay of two nights, start at £43 per night per gite. The company took over the Gites de France organisation last November.

SPA specialist Enna Low (0171-584 2841) can offer health breaks in a warm climate to help you prepare yourself for the winter. Five days staying at Bioclim, on the Côte d'Azur, the largest sea-water therapy and fitness centre in Europe, cost £693 for flights, half-board and three thalassotherapy treatments a day. A personalised treatment programme designed for slimming, toning and fighting stress is available at the Clos des Oliviers, a converted Andalusian farmhouse in Marbella, for £795 (including flights and full board). A holistic approach to relaxation is the key to the Corviglia Palace's five-day break in Malta, which costs £653 for flights, half-board and lots of treatments.

## Culture tours

CULTURAL pursuits from the British Museum Traveller (0171-323 8895) include autumn breaks to Vienna and the newly opened Louvre Galleries in Paris. On the five-day Austrian tour, which costs £975 for flights, half-board accommodation and entrance fees, there are visits to art collections in Vienna, an evening at the opera and lectures on the Habsburg Empire. The last night



Return to the fighting fields: Battle of Cambrai in November 1917, where massed tanks broke through the German lines, hastening the end of the First World War

## JILL CRAWSHAW'S AUTUMN BREAKS

is spent in Salzburg, following the steps of Mozart.

A three-day tour to Paris in early November, for travellers with an interest in ancient Persia, offers the chance to see the newly opened ancient Iran galleries at the Louvre. The tour, priced at £593, is under the tutelage of John Curtis, keeper of Western Antiquities at the British Museum.

## Nouveau taste

STAMINA is needed for the trip by VFB (01242 240335) to the Fête des Sarmantelles in the heart of Beaujolais Nouveau country at vintage time. The three-day trip includes an evening of wine tasting, a gala dinner, a torchlit procession to where the new wine is officially launched by a fireworks display — and dancing till dawn.

Based at Lyons, the festival break costs £324 for return travel by train, two nights' B&B, tastings, dinner at the festival and a dinner cruise on the Rhône.

If you want to help with the harvesting (though it is not obligatory), Arblaster and Clarke (01730 893344) can arrange a five-night trip to a wine chateau at Minervois.

near Carcassonne. There will be copious meals and tastings and Derek Smedley, wine consultant, will be on hand for information and advice. The price is £1,099 for flights, most meals with wine and, of course, the tastings.

For resting fans, Moswin (0116-271 9922) offers three-night weekends half-board at Derdesheim, on Germany's Wine Road, for £399, including flights.

## Hunt the truffle

AUTUMN tours for fungi fanciers include woodland forays with experts in search of edible species, cookery lessons and lots of sampling from gourmet menus. "Mushroom Special" weekends are organised by Unicorn Holidays (01582 834400) from September 26 and all through October.

The weekends are based at Le Manoir du Lys in Normandy and cost £377 for a two-night stay. Full board and cross-Channel ferries for car and passengers are included.

The annual truffle hunt is organised by Arblaster and Clarke

(01730 893344) take place at the end of October in the Langhe hills of Piedmont in Italy, heartland of the much-prized white fungus. Eating, truffle hunting and tasting local barolo wines are all on the menu. The price is £829 for flights and four nights' full-board.

## Bird watch

ABOUT 60,000 trumpeting cranes with 8ft wingspans, droves of bustards and crowds of lesser white-fronted geese all assemble on the Hungarian plains during October. It is part of their great migration from Siberia to the warmer winter climate of Africa.

In all there are about 100 bird species to spot during the four-night break from birdwatching specialist Limosa Holidays (01263 578143). The price is £695, which includes return scheduled flights and full-board hotel accommodation in Hajdusoboszo, with picnics or lunches in rural inns.

There is interesting sightseeing nearby, including Vintgar Gorge, the Sum waterfall, the less developed but attractive Lake Bohinj

and a clutch of little medieval churches full of superb frescoes. Slovenia Pursuits (01763 852646) offers three-night breaks, staying on working farms or in small hotels, from £310. This price includes B&B accommodation in a farmhouse and flights.

## Beautiful Bled

PICTURE-BOOK Lake Bled, in Slovenia, used to be the summer holiday venue of the former royal family of Yugoslavia and was much loved by President Tito, who entertained foreign guests there. Bled has sunny autumn temperatures and activities such as walking, fishing, riding and cycling. The water is surprisingly warm, so you can usually swim in the lake well into October.

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and a clutch of little medieval churches full of superb frescoes. Slovenia Pursuits (01763 852646) offers three-night breaks, staying on working farms or in small hotels, from £310. This price includes B&B accommodation in a farmhouse and flights.

## Opera treats

ALTHOUGH tickets for the Westford Opera Festival (October 16-November 2) are sold out at the box office, opera specialist JMB Travel (01905 425628) still has packages available with tickets for each of three productions: *Elena Da Felice* featuring Savio Mercedante; *Rusalka* featuring Alexander Dargomizhsky and *La Fiamma* with Ottorino Respighi.

The festival was founded in 1951 from humble origins as the Westford Gramophone Society, with performances at the Theatre Royal. Sir Compton McKenzie, its presenter, suggested organising live performances instead.

A four-day escorted tour with three nights' full board, flights and three operas costs £719. Three-night breaks by car and ferry, with two opera tickets, cost £285.

## TRAVEL NEWS

## Staying out of Hong Kong

THE HANDOVER of Hong Kong on June 30 failed to attract many tourists. Visitor numbers from the UK fell by more than 11 per cent to 24,501 during June and the total number of visitors from other countries fell further by 14 per cent to 789,000.

The Hong Kong Tourist Association said many people had assumed Hong Kong would be both full and expensive during June. However, UK tourist numbers were up by 6 per cent for the first half of this year.

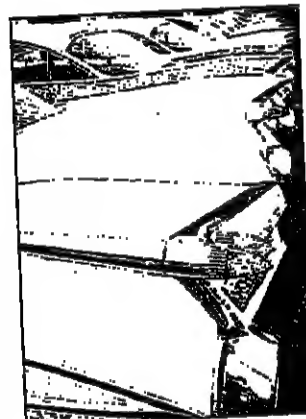
HOLIDAYMAKERS facing flight delays may receive better compensation next summer. The Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) is studying plans to introduce a sliding scale of payment to take effect below the 12-hour average used by most airlines. Keith Richards, ABTA's head of consumer affairs, said: "The issue has got to be taken seriously if we are to stave off government intervention."

THOUSANDS of holiday-makers renting a car in the US could be under-insured, according to Marcus Hearn, a travel insurance broker. The firm said car rental firms in the US charge additional rates to cover their vehicles — but levels of personal liability insurance can be as low as \$5,000.

Jeffrey Klipp, managing director, said: "In the event of an accident, the car will be covered but the driver could end up being sued for thousands of dollars."

The firm is one of several brokers which sells policies of about £3.50 a day to take third-party liability up to \$1m. There is also \$100,000 cover if the tourist is in collision with any uninsured motorists.

STEVE KEENAN



Tourists in the US should check their car insurance

Ferry rides offer the best views of a city. Jeremy Seal offers his favourite top ten

## Wait until the boat comes in



The Star ferry, which runs every three minutes in peak hours from Kowloon to Hong Kong Island, is one of the world's best-known ferry rides and one of the cheapest

1950s, this route was reopened in 1990 and leaves San Francisco's handsome Ferry Building every hour in the rush hour and every 90 minutes otherwise, calling at Alameda on the 30-minute crossing to Oakland's Jack London

Square. Highlights are views of Alcatraz Island and passing under the Bay Bridge.

7. The Bainbridge Island Ferry, Seattle: The 2,000-capacity ferries make 22 trips daily from the island enclave of Bainbridge to Pier 52 at Seattle's downtown waterfront. The nine-mile crossing, which carries wealthy island dwellers to work (see Michael Douglas in *Disclosure*), takes 35 minutes. In winter, the Puget Sound crossing can be cold and rough but on good days, the views of islands, snow-capped mountains and even occasional whale-sightings make for an inspirational commute.

6. The Mersey Ferry, Liverpool: The 1960s ferries run a triangular commuter service that links Pierhead, Liverpool, with Seacombe and Woodside on Wirral. Bonuses include

views of Liverpool's great Victorian landmarks, the Liver Building, the Port of Liverpool Building and the Cunard Building, as well as the Anglican Cathedral.

5. The Niteroi Ferry, Rio de Janeiro: The nine-mile bridge across Guanabara Bay was not designed for pedestrians, who continue to pack the ferry from the quay at Praça 15 de Novembro. Residential Niteroi has little to offer, get straight back on the first return ferry to savour views of Rio's harbour, the Sugar Loaf Mountain and the statue of Christ. Also enjoy the hawkers' offerings of everything from jewellery to home-made ice cream on the 20-minute crossing.

4. The Manly Ferry, Sydney: Manly is a resort area at the mouth of Sydney Harbour. Ferries leave the Circular

Quay, in the shadow of the Harbour Bridge, and head past the Opera House through the Heads, Sydney Harbour's dramatic entrance.

3. The Star Ferry, Hong Kong: The Star Ferry between Tsim Tsa Tsui, Kowloon and Central, Hong Kong Island, which will celebrate its centenary next year, is one of the world's best-known ferry rides — and one of the cheapest. Don't try and save 2p by going second class: you'll be on the lower deck and miss the views of Hong Kong's high-rise skyline. The service runs between 6.30am and 11.30pm with a three-minute frequency during peak hours.

2. The Bosphorus Ferries, Istanbul: Despite soaring bridges across the Bosphorus, Istanbul remains a city crisscrossed by ferry routes. The best is the ten-minute crossing between European Karakoy, on the Beyoglu side of Galata Bridge and Asian Haydar-pasha where the ferry moors below the great *fin-de-siècle* train station, all ornate columns and an exotic departs board featuring Tehran and Damascus. On the crossing, waiters in once-white jackets offer black tea, coke and yoghurt drink called *ayran*. Buy a lottery ticket or have your shoes cleaned while enjoying unrivalled views of the city's mosques and palaces.

1. The Staten Inland Ferry, New York: Carrying up to 4,500 passengers on each journey, the ferry makes more than 50 crossings each way every weekday from St George Ferry Terminal on the island to the Whitehall Ferry Terminal in Lower Manhattan. The five-mile journey takes about 25 minutes, plenty of time to take in the glory of the skyline and to imagine yourself taking Manhattan by storm like Melanie Griffiths in *Working Girl*.

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CHES

by Raymond Keene

**GRANDMASTER** Jon Speelman, the former World Championship semi-finalist, crashed badly at the end of the first week of the Smith & Williamson British Chess Championship in Hove, which finished yesterday.

Speelman lost both to James Plaskett and Malcolm Pein. However, he did have the consolation of winning one of the most beautiful and elegant games.

**White:** Jon Speelman; **Black:** Charles Cobb  
**Smith & Williamson British Chess Championship, August 1997**  
**Queen's Indian Defence**

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nc3 e6  
3 g3 b5

In a later round Plaskett beat Speelman with 3...c5.

4 Bg2 Bb7 5 c4 Bc7  
6 O-O 7 Nc3 Nc6  
8 Bb2 Nf6 9 d5 Bf8

10 Rb1

Finally securing his bishop from exchange.

11... Nac5 12 Nd4 Nac3

13 Bxc3 e5

An interesting pawn sacrifice.

14 Nd5 Bg5 15 f4

White could preserve his extra pawn with 15 Ne3 but after 15... Bx3 16 Bx3 Qg5 Black has magnificent compensation. Speelman prefers to enter complications.

16... Rb5 17 Rb5 Qg5 18 b4 Na6

19 Bb2 Qh5 20 Bb3 Qh6

21 Bb4 Qh5 22 Rb3 Qh6

23 Rb1

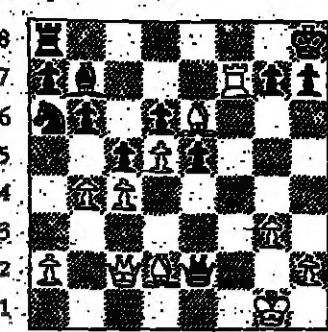
The upshot of Black's combination is that White has pressure in the centre and on the king's flank, while Black's knight on a6 is lamentably short of perspectives.

23... Rb3 24 Bb3 Qh6

25 Bb4 Qh5 26 Bf5 Qh6

If 26... Qx2 White has the pleasant choice between 27 Bb7 and 27 Bb6. 28 Q5 with an enduring attack.

27 Bb6 c5 28 Rf7 Qx2



If Black had now been hoping for 29 Rb7 Nxb4 with counterplay he is in for a shock. Speelman comes up with a thunderbolt.

29 Bb6 Qc1+

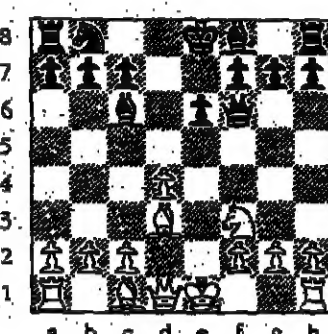
If 29... Qx2 White mates commencing 30 Bg7.

30 Kg2 Rg8 31 Bg7+

Black resigns.

After 31... Rsg7 32 Rf8 mates.

The Winning Move of August 4 led many of you into a trap. White to play. Black has allowed the possibility of 1 Bg5, apparently trapping his queen, as he anticipates the reply 1... Bxf3, counter-attacking against the white queen.



**Solution:** 1 Bg5 Bxf3 2 Qd2 and the black queen is trapped. The suggestion by many readers was that Black could escape after 1 Bg5 Bxf3 2 Qd2 by means of 2... Qxd4. However, the discovery 3 Bb5+ still wins Black's queen. For example 3... Nc6 4 Qxd4, when Black's knight is pinned, or 3... Bc6 (best) 4 Qxd4 Bxb5. However, White with queen against two minor pieces and a pawn will win easily.

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene,  
Chess Correspondent

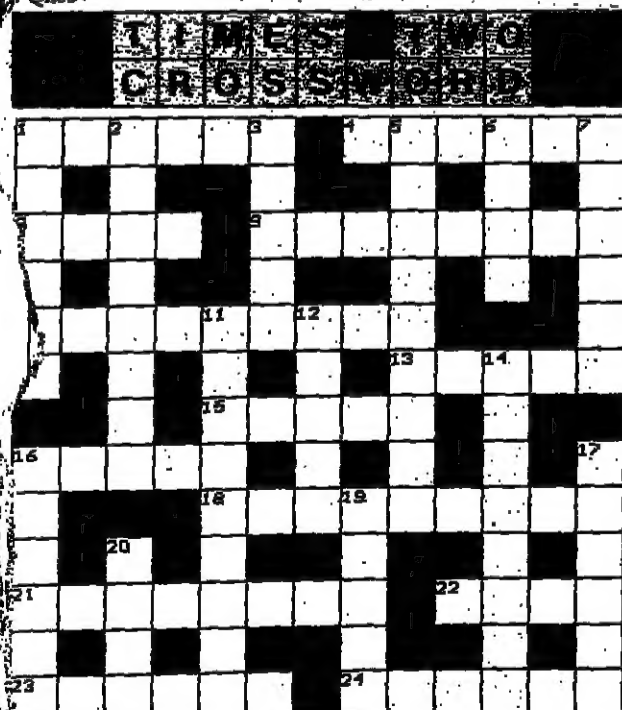
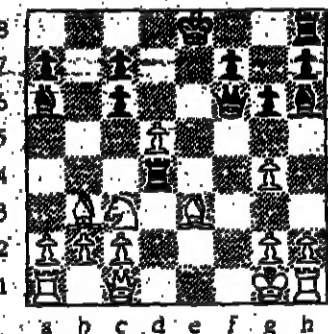
Black to play. This position is from the game Hazai - Sax, Budapest 1971.

Although White is a piece up, Black's two wonderful bishops cut into the white position like a pair of scissors. How did Black continue?

The first correct answer drawn on Thursday will win a year's subscription to the Staunton Society. The answer will be published next Saturday.

**Solution to last week's competition:** 1 Qxb6+

Last week's winner: B Piper, Lower Edmonton, London.



No 1174

- ACROSS**
- Entertainment: crossroads (6)
  - Shock, fear (6)
  - Unwell (4)
  - S Africa capital (6)
  - By that very fact (4,5)
  - Relative: pawnbroker (5)
  - Rapture (5)
  - Shrink in fear (5)
  - Approximate (9)
  - Abandoned (8)
  - Style of walking (4)
  - Blush (6)
  - Author (6)
- DOWN**
- Of the universe (6)
  - Human-powered boat (6)
  - Brownish tone (eg in old photo) (4)
  - Turned up (nose) (9)
  - (Distinctive) attire (4)
  - Hypnotic state (6)
  - Construct: copact (9)
  - Incisive: crunch (5)
  - Pretender (to title) (8)
  - Grant; consult (4)
  - Rankle (6)
  - Prolong (library loan); start again (5)
  - Poke (4)

**SOLUTION TO NO 1173**

ROSS: 4 Fable 7 Scavenger 8 Bump 9 Regiment  
early 13 Miller 14 Retain 15 Reggae 18 Gunfight  
and 20 Hate mail 21 Tryst  
N: 1 Assume 2 Tamper 3 Betray 4 Feminine 5 Blue  
6 Easter 11 Autonomy 12 Twilight 14 Ragout  
15 ten 16 Guffaw 17 Arnold

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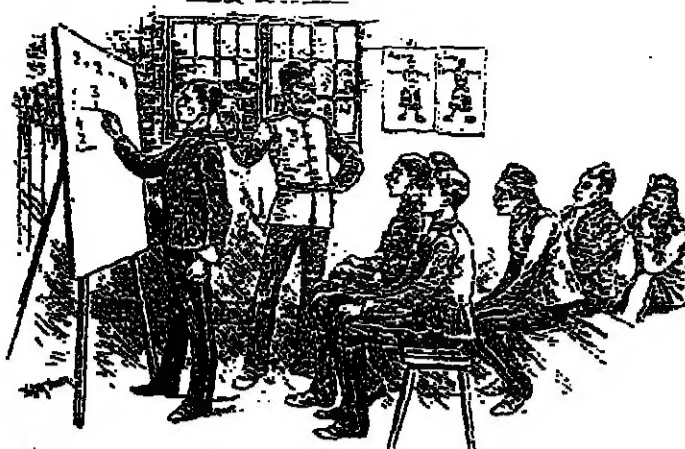
PUNCHLINE

**READERS** are invited to write an amusing caption for the cartoon (right), from The Strand Magazine (reproduced from Westminster Libraries, Sherlock Holmes Collection, Marylebone Library).

The cartoon will be printed again next week with a caption from those submitted.

Send caption suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to: Strand Caption, 65, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

The Editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, August 20.



"In confidence Sir, I think the lady would get a better trade-in at Harrods"

The winning caption for last week's cartoon (above) was submitted by H. Rothwell of Barnston, Essex

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

**SLUB**

- An untidy woman
- A lumpy yarn
- To keep goal at lacrosse

**TORRY**

- To tease a bull
- To toast
- A purple rock plant

**URSCHLEIM**

- A Nordic Hell
- Primal slime
- A sweet Austrian wine

**SNOEK**

- A rude gesture
- A lazy layabout
- A fish

Answers on page 18

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

**IN CONTRACTS** where you have plenty of trumps, there are often possibilities of elimination play. The hand below is an example.

Dealer South North-South game IMPs

♠ Q8732  
♥ A853  
♦ 1074  
♣ 10

N  
W E  
S

♠ A4  
♥ 98742  
♦ AKJ852  
♣ \*

How should declarer continue? The Russian declarer (Kholomev) cashed the ace of diamonds and then exited with a third heart. This was the full deal:

♠ Q8732  
♥ A853  
♦ 1074  
♣ 10  
N  
W E  
S  
♠ A4  
♥ 98742  
♦ AKJ852  
♣ \*

Contract: Four Hearts doubled, by South  
Lead: King of clubs

In the match between Russia and Great Britain in the Generali European Open Championship, the Hacken twins were East-West on this hand.

South was playing a Strong Club system so, as his One Diamond opening limited his hand to 16 points, he could afford to reverse with Two Hearts on the second round of the auction.

An Acol player would just rebid Two Diamonds over East's Two Clubs. West's bid of Three Diamonds showed a club raise with a smattering of high cards.

The declarer ruffed the club lead and ducked a heart. East won with the jack and returned the king of hearts. West discarding a club.

When East won the third heart he had to play away from the king of spades or give a ruff and discard, so the defence lost their spade trick.

At the other table, Gerald Tredinnick also played in Four Hearts, but he was not doubled. He ruffed the club lead and played ace and another heart: now East could cash his second heart trick before exiting with his singleton diamond. Thus Tredinnick lost two hearts, a diamond and a spade.

Even without the clue of the double this was poor play. The hand is trivial if the hearts split 2-2. In case they were 3-1, Tredinnick should have played as Kholomev did, or alternatively cashed the ace of diamonds before playing ace and another heart.

Both plays gain whenever the player with the third heart has no safe exit. And, at worst, East will turn up with three hearts and be able to play a second diamond.

At that point, declarer has to guess the diamonds, which he also

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott



The Cyberspace Thirty-Three winner devoted a web site to his allotment

"I WOULD devote my Web site to my allotment, which is Plot 29 on the Pakenham Close site in Cambridge," said Peter Marshall, "an amateur vegetable and flower grower" and a winner in last month's Cyberspace Thirty-Three competition.

On my Web site I would include up-to-date photographs and information about what jobs are being done or what crops are being harvested. At present I am enjoying lovely mangel, summer cabbages, courgettes, potatoes, lettuce and carrots, to name but a few. Mr Marshall will also use his site to promote the health benefits of running allotments, gardening tips and to give details of how to go about getting an allotment.

He is one of 12 readers who have each won 12-month Direct Connection subscriptions and the opportunity to run their own Web sites for all the world to visit and explore.

Darrel Lowry, of Anahilt, Co Down, Northern Ireland, came up with an equally knock-out idea for his spot in cyberspace. He wrote: "I am an anaesthetist in Belfast and my home page would be a site for people to discover what anaesthetists do - many people do not realise we are qualified doctors -

and offer information about operations, pain relief and possible complications. Although professionally I send people to sleep, my site would be exciting enough to keep people interested."

Mr Lowry added that his site will "serve as a home page for the Northern Ireland Group of Anaesthetists in Training, providing announcements and meeting details as well as links to related Internet sites." To cap it all, he hopes his page will become something of a tourist trap. "I would also like to use my home page to promote the Province, with Internet links to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the Belfast Telegraph."

Richard Symonds of Bexleyheath, Kent, plans to use his Web site to allow others to experience "the whole misery of modern-day travel without having to leave the house". He wrote: "Research shows that the longest time which most families spend together is when travelling in the car. My Web site would use this feature and create the concept of the virtual journey. Whether by car, train or

bus, my site would have the theme of travel with no arrival.

"It would be for the whole family to use, accessing the site for an interminable virtual journey around the M25 or along the M4 or M3. We could recapture those authentic jams without the stress levels." He added another spin on the idea: "A package holiday site could be accessed with airport

delays, baggage-handlers' strikes and missed air-departure slots."

Our other winners, whose entries will be featured in the coming few weeks, are: Nigel Lamb of Edgware, Middlesex; C. Emblem of Newmarket, Suffolk; Gavin Macgregor-Skinner of Kingston upon Thames, Surrey; Bola Adamolekun of Hampstead, northwest London; Stephen Cole of Farringdon, London; Alan Essex, of Leeds; Norman Payne of Liverpool; Bryan Goodridge of Birmingham; and Leslie King of Hove, Sussex.

Each will now try translating their dream sites into realities, with help from Direct Connection's in-house team if required, and the relevant addresses will be published as soon as sites open for visitors. Thank you to all who entered. If you were not a winner but would still like to get connected to the Internet, we have arranged a discount with Direct Connection which will save readers £35. Mention The Times and you can get a 12-month subscription for the price of ten months, with no set-up fee.

for just £135. Telephone 0800 0720000 for details.

The eternal search for an excellent pinball title for the PC goes on, despite a clutch of new releases. The best of the latest rather lean crop has to be Madix Pinball 97, which runs on Windows 95. It has three tables - Mad Scientist, Alien Daze and Captain Hero.

Nudging is an essential part of gameplay, and there are plenty of multi-ball moments to keep you alert. Four can compete in rotation. One of the least inspiring is Pro Pinball timesheet! for Windows 95. It claims to behave "just like the real thing", although if pinball was this bland it would never have caught on.

Still hungry for a truly interactive pinball, I also tested the 21st Century Pinball Construction Kit, which runs on Windows 3.1 and later versions. With 30 playing fields plus pins, jet bumpers, flashing lights and roll-over switches, one might think it promised the moon. But although the title suggests you start with a blank canvas to build on, it is actually just painting by predetermined numbers. You can only piece together, with slight variation, someone else's mediocre master designs.

THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

No 3423: Cathexis from Dimitry

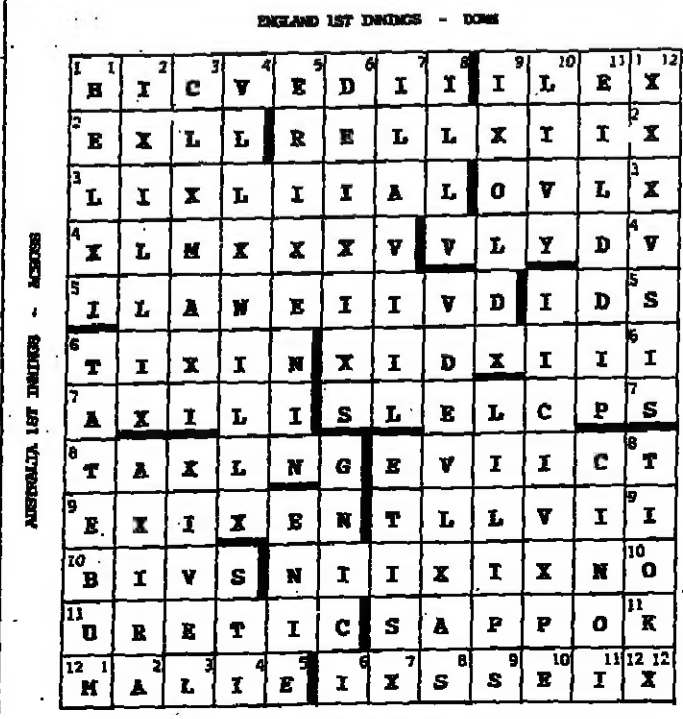
**ENTRIES** are formed from clue answers by converting the word to a string consisting of its numerical form, using A=1 to Z=26, jumbling the individual digits and reinterpreting them as another word for entry. Thus, DIMITRY (49135201825) has produced CATHEXIS (31208524919) whereas among other Listener setters tackling this idea, ADAM might have created MAN, BUFO could display ZEAL and SABRE would have been SURE, though had ALBAN produced BUNK, ASCOT might have let off STEAM. The twelve ballistics clues lead to proper nouns, the entered forms for which, the compiler hopes, can be seen as strangely appropriate or amusing in relation to the answer. Chambers (1993) is recommended but does not contain some proper nouns. Dimitry wishes to thank HYPERION for his help.

ACROSS

- Modern composer's tune shocks one awfully (11)
- Beginning to indicate primitive Carib's core source of poison (5)
- Imperfection shown by 250 in 1000 (4)
- Small farm Scots bought around river (5)
- Rooks moult younger losing tail (7)
- Positive termination? OK death, perhaps (7)
- Pyramids cut off thanks to rising water surging on coast (6)
- Car run over on motorway (3)
- Cure thirsty sailor (7)
- Gothamite held back by the tired Batman (8)
- Judge boss a high-flier? (5)
- Blue flower developed from lilacs (6)
- One above all turning to cut grass for fodder (6)
- Drizzles around borders with Sweden (5)
- American abandoning strange item of bric-a-brac (5)
- Wood cutter disreputable person apprehended (6)
- A native acting dramatic character (7)
- Guard shaken up in BR rescue (8)
- Some like babies' food (5)
- In greyish woman collecting centrally rag and bones? (6)
- An amount of computer memory equipment holding parts of brain (7)

DOWN

- Doctors drop estimates (9)
- Sun hat material lifts, exposes head, perhaps, to sunlight (9)
- Brownish-yellow grass in wet soil (7)
- What help audience, reacting as if dead? (8)
- Transport vehicle on railway (5)
- Regular publication unknown beforehand (6)
- Office claims lots of letters (8)
- Judges American is traitor (5)
- See college in night rioting securing doors (6)
- Rabulous bird turning corner (3)
- Poor's measure (8)
- Erican prince cut down a fruit tree (6)
- Small airship showing a trace of movement in radar image (5)
- Got rid of old American fish in tin (6)
- He carries out extra beer (8)
- Shuckers! It would be wrong taking out half of middle (7)
- Greeting oriental native in part of high mountains (9)
- Communist belief: machine gun gets round both King and Society (7)
- Two men intend uprising for old kingdom (7)
- Counter attempt to sell protected bird (8)
- She inspires sedentary author's repeated name-dropping (7)
- Computerised method of entry vital to rocket launch site (6)
- Like some fair people run without care (5)
- Divert a No.32, perhaps (5)
- Cobalt held in pious fear (6)
- Fleet, but limiting velocity (4)

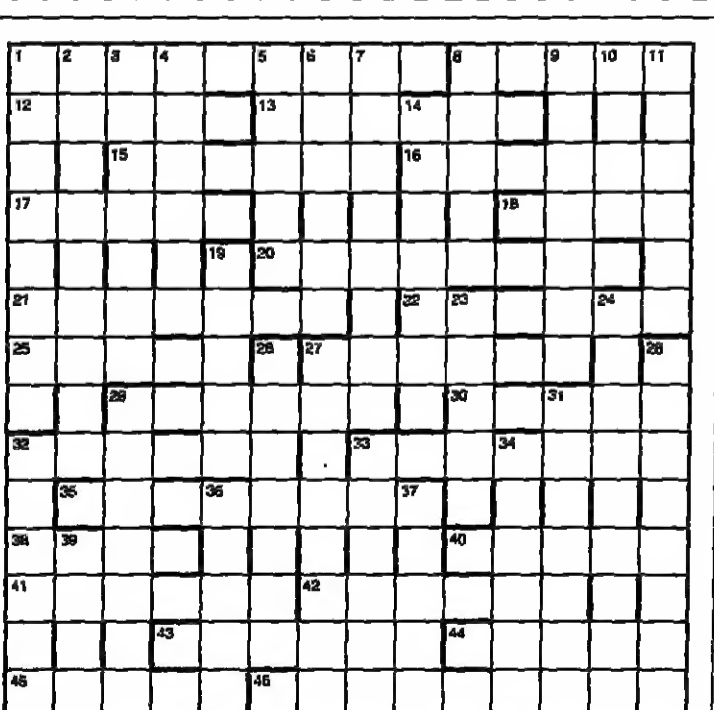


**Solution to No3420: Headingly 81**  
by Phil Brindall

The nine answers which have to be adjusted using something other than Roman numerals are as follows:

- Australia 1st innings**  
6. Tibetan (beta) (2) + 58 = xi (60)  
**England 1st innings**  
5. four fire (four + 5 = nine. 1 + 10 = XI)  
**England 2nd innings**  
5. ODs (0 + 1 = 1)  
6. mud (mu (40) + 20 = xi (60). D + 13 = DXIII)  
10. onion (1 + 18 = XIX. 0 + 11 = 11)  
11. pietas (pi eta (58) + 2 = koppa (90))  
**Australia 2nd innings**  
1. etat (eta (8) + 34 = mu beta (42))  
2. Anura (nu (50) + 10 = xi (60))  
12. tiki (1 + 9 = 10. 1 + 9 = X)

The winner is R.Teuton of Stockcross, Berkshire  
The five runners-up are: J.Leach of London; M. and N.Hay; Sheila Perkins of Rushden, Northants; D.Milne of Shepton Mallet; Nigel Gavin of Sevenoaks, Kent.



LISTENER CROSSWORD No 3423

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